

Hafa Adai!

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275 DAYS

**BEFORE THE CW
PROGRAM EXPIRES
ON DEC. 31, 2014**

POLL RESULTS

What is your primary source of information when looking for jobs?



Sunday, March 30, 2014

INSIDE

ASIA



Australia's prime minister is hopeful a clue will soon emerge to narrow the hunt for Flight 370.

► PAGE 17

LIFE & STYLE



One Direction cleans up at 27th annual Kids' Choice Awards.

► PAGE 20

Kim prevails in racketeering lawsuit against Quichocho, wife

» Jury awards Kim \$2.4M in damages

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

A federal court jury rendered on Friday a unanimous verdict holding attorney Ramon K. Quichocho, his wife Frances, his law firm, and their company Karissa LLC liable to pay \$2.4 million in damages to businesswoman Jung Ja Kim, who sued them for racketeering and other claims.

See **LAWSUIT** on **Page 4**

New CW extension bill; blunt call for Labor to decide 'soon'

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

As frustration grows with the federal government's lack of a decision allowing the CNMI's continued access to foreign workers after Dec. 31, 2014, Delegate Gregorio Kili-li C. Sablan (Ind-MP) not only introduced last week a standalone bill extending the so-called CW program by five years but also asked U.S. Labor Secretary Thomas Perez during a congressional hearing to "make a decision soon."

See **CW** on **Page 4**

» **Kili-li puts Perez on spotlight during committee hearing**
» **Governor hopes decision rendered by now**

Inos eyes HK casino investors, new Tinian Dynasty owner

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

Among possible investors eyeing an exclusive license to operate a casino on Saipan are from South Korea and two groups from Hong Kong, including Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino new owner Mega Stars Overseas Ltd., according to Gov. Eloy S. Inos.

The governor and lawmakers met separately with Hong Kong investors the past few months for a plan to invest close to \$3 billion in tourism-related businesses

See **CASINO** on **Page 4**

» **2,000 guest rooms in 3 years**
» **Inos yet to receive casino amendment bill from Legislature**

Attorney Ramon K. Quichocho and his wife, Frances, hold hands on their way to the U.S. District Court for the NMI Friday afternoon. The jury reached a verdict finding the Quichocho law firm, and Karissa LLC liable to pay \$2.4 in damages to businesswoman Jung Ja Kim.

JAYSON CAMACHO

Kalabera Cave development begins

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

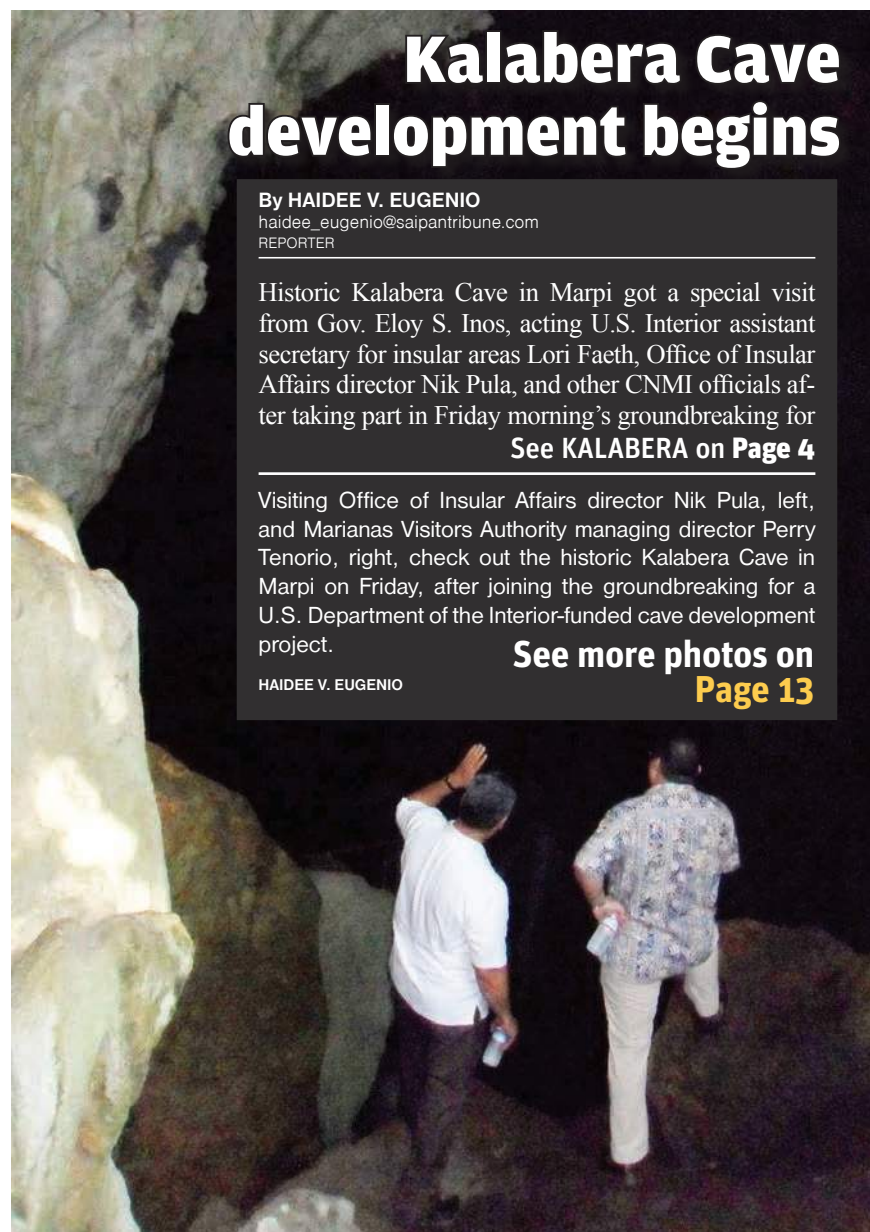
Historic Kalabera Cave in Marpi got a special visit from Gov. Eloy S. Inos, acting U.S. Interior assistant secretary for insular areas Lori Faeth, Office of Insular Affairs director Nik Pula, and other CNMI officials after taking part in Friday morning's groundbreaking for

See **KALABERA** on **Page 4**

Visiting Office of Insular Affairs director Nik Pula, left, and Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio, right, check out the historic Kalabera Cave in Marpi on Friday, after joining the groundbreaking for a U.S. Department of the Interior-funded cave development project.

See more photos on **Page 13**

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO



Inos, CPA seek solutions to Rota shipping woes. PAGE 3
Two car crashes, no one injured. PAGE 5

Local



JAYSON CAMACHO

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. executives and nurses show their statement of support forms that help service members keep their jobs while deployed.

CHCC signs support for ESGR

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. hospital administrator Jesse M. Tudela led head nurses and organization managers in signing a statement of support for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve last Thursday, March 27.

Rose Igitol and Janice Tenorio of ESGR briefed the hospital staff of the organization's important role in ensuring that employers, Guards members, and reservists understand their roles.

ESGR is a volunteer organization under the U.S Department of Defense that seeks to develop and promote a culture in which all American employers support and value the military service of their employees, with ESGR as the principal advocate within DoD.

"This statement of support publicly shows that you as employers support your employees who are under the armed services," Igitol said.

Tudela said that more high school graduates enter the armed forces and it is possible that some members of their staff are also Guard members

or reservists.

"One of you might have them under your unit and someday they will be deployed. They are protected, and we cannot release them," he added.

Igitol said this protection is enforced by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994.

USERRA is the federal law that establishes rights and responsibilities for members of the National Guard and Reserve and their civilian employers. It affects employment, reemployment, employment benefits and retention in employment, when employees serve or have served in the uniformed services.

Two service members are currently employed at the hospital. They are Dr. John Tudela and Ivan Igitol.

During the briefing of the statement of support, Igitol and Tenorio told the staff that an awards banquet by ESGR will be held in April this year. The awards banquet seeks to honor and award employers who support ESGR. (Jayson Camacho)

It's crunch time for governor to submit budget to Legislature

Gov. Eloy S. Inos has only until tomorrow, April 1, to submit his proposed fiscal year 2015 budget to the Legislature. He said on Friday that the figure could now be at least \$130 million, higher by some \$7 million compared to the 2014 budget of \$123.4 million.

The governor said he will be meeting today with the mayors of Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and the Northern Islands on the budget for fiscal year 2015, which runs from Oct. 1, 2014 to Sept. 30, 2015.

But press secretary Angel Demapan said yesterday this does not necessarily mean that the governor will submit the budget to the Legislature today.

The budget increase of at least \$7 million from the current bud-

get is part of the needed \$27 million payment to the retirement settlement trust account for 2015.

House Ways and Means Committee chair Tony Sablan (Ind-Saipan) said they would immediately work on the governor's budget submission once it's referred to his committee.

As of yesterday, moreover, the governor has yet to submit his 2014 supplemental budget to the Legislature. Sablan said based on his earlier meetings with the governor, the supplemental budget could include "a little over \$300,000" to refund members of the Commonwealth Government Employees Credit Union. It could therefore contain a provision dissolving the credit union, Sablan said. (Haidee V. Eugenio)

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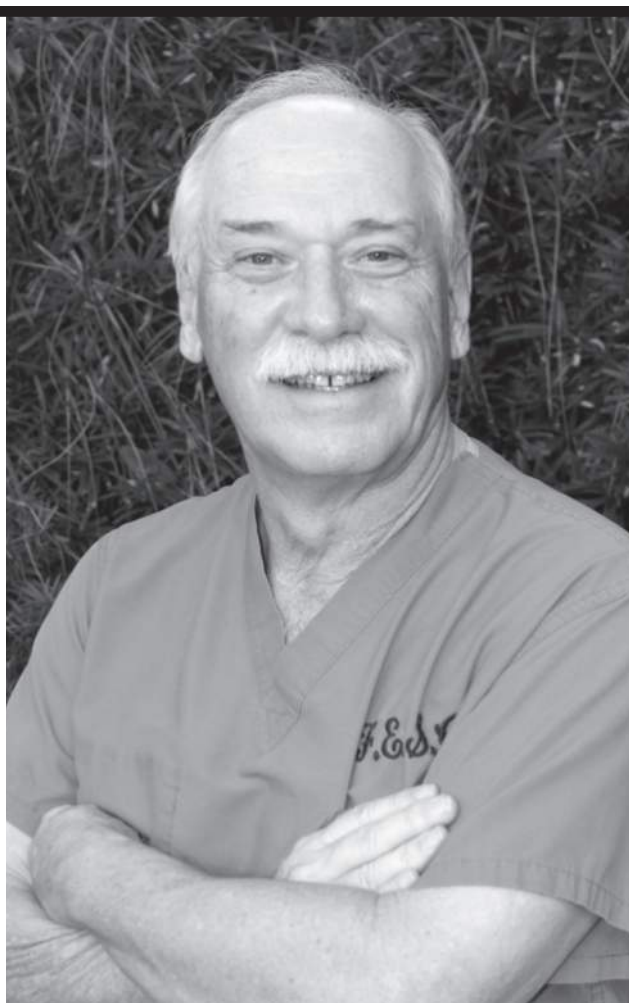
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Inos, CPA seek solutions to resolve shipping woes on Rota

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

To remedy the shipping woes on Rota, Gov. Eloy S. Inos meet with officials of the Commonwealth Ports Authority last week to seek its views on the integrity of the island's harbor.

CPA executive director MaryAnn Lizama told *Saipan Tribune* that the March 26 meeting centered on seeking solutions to the long-time shipping concerns on the island that have on numerous occasions caused a crisis for its people.

The government recently

placed Rota under an "emergency declaration" following a shortage of basic commodities and supplies due to the lack of cargoes being delivered to the island. Shippers have blamed bad weather for their inability to dock on Rota. To provide relief, the Office of the Governor declared Rota's East Harbor as an "emergency alternative port" during bad weather.

Lizama disclosed that the governor specifically inquired about the integrity and capacity of the "emergency alternative port," which Lizama hinted is unknown at this time.

CPA's official point of entry

on Rota is the West Harbor, but bad weather usually prevents vessels from docking at this harbor. Local officials on the island have tossed the idea of developing the East Harbor and an independent study has been commissioned to check if this is feasible.

It was learned that the West Harbor's channel has limited capability and cannot accommodate vessels longer than 235 feet. The only way for the port to be able to accommodate bigger vessels is by widening its channel opening.

The area identified for the proposed East Harbor is not CPA property but public land.

Lizama assured that CPA supports the idea of using the East Harbor as an "emer-

gency alternative port" as it doesn't want to deny the people of Rota their supply of commodities.

"We have no choice, because we don't want to deny the Rota community the commodities that they need. But as to the integrity of the said harbor, we don't know yet," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

Lizama said that she informed the governor that CPA will seek guidance from the U.S. Coast Guard to determine the integrity and capacity of the proposed East Harbor. She pointed out that the capacity of the pier itself to hold "heavy equipment" must be established.

CPA had maintained its position to upgrade and expand

the existing West Harbor and is, in fact, in the process of commissioning a separate study for this. The U.S. Coast Guard had already approached CPA-Rota and offered its help to do this study at no cost to the ports authority. It is estimated that the feasibility study for the West Harbor upgrading will cost about \$400,000, which requires a 50-50 match.

The CPA management and its board earlier opposed the idea of building a new port on Rota. For CPA, any funds for harbor development must first be used for the West Harbor, the "existing and active" ports handled by the agency.

Developing the existing harbor is estimated to cost \$16 million to \$19 million. Once

the feasibility study is completed, the agency will look for federal grants and locally sourced funds, including untapped CIP monies to implement the project.

CDA loan collections total \$450,000 in just 5 months

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Development Authority collected nearly half a million dollars from its outstanding loans, an amount the agency described as still "within range" of previous years' collections.

CDA comptroller Donnie Militante disclosed to *Saipan Tribune* that from October 2013 through February 2014, the authority's collections from all its loan programs totaled over \$450,000.

On a monthly basis, CDA collected about \$80,000 on average. This figure, however, may significantly increase once proceeds from auction properties are factored in.

"The collection figure is still within range. But this usually increases when auction proceeds come in," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

As of January, CDA has 54 "active" borrowers but this number varies from month to month, Militante said.

According to CDA executive director Manuel Sablan, the moratorium on the loan program, which was implemented since early 2012, remains in effect.

As to when this will be lifted, Sablan said: "The board can always lift the moratorium either partially or fully. But right now, they ask us [the management] to explore other angles so that we would be able to accommodate some of the new loans."

The high delinquency rate on loans was one of the factors that led to the loan program's suspension.

Sablan hinted that the moratorium on CDA loan program will stay for awhile as the agency is aggressively pushing two initiatives to help new and existing borrowers: the Small Business Credit Initiative Program and the Microloan Guaranteed Program.

"The SBCDI program is moving now and we're in the process of finalizing details of our proposed microloan guaran-

teed loan program, which will be further discussed at the next board meeting," said Sablan.

He said that both programs offer better "arrangements" that are beneficial to borrowers. "There's nothing that prevent borrowers from making loans because—despite the moratorium—there are these programs especially designed to help them."

The new Small Business Credit Initiative Program has been awarded \$13 million in funds by the U.S. Treasury and has already made available over \$4 million to CNMI borrowers in its first year.

Under the SBCI program, applications are submitted directly to banks, which will decide on the loan proposal. CDA and the Department of Commerce will serve as support system for applicants in terms of trainings and other assistance.

In February this year, CDA also unveiled its plan to open a "Microloan Guaranteed Program." Under the new program, CDA will work with commercial banks and provide 80 percent guarantee on short-term loans specific to small businesses, fishermen, and farmers, among other borrowers.

Based on the initial proposal presented to the board, CDA plans to allocate \$750,000 for the microloan program and targets to initially guarantee 50 loans in the following disbursements: 12 loans amounting each to \$35,000 or less; 13 loans each amounting to \$15,000 or less; and 25 loans each amounting to \$10,000 or less. Recommended payment term is up to two years.

This new loan program was described as a "bridge" to better the relationship between banks and borrowers. The objective of the program is to graduate the borrowers in two years and eventually enter into the SBCDI, which is also a bank-driven program. The board is expected to launch the new program when details are finalized.

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CASINO

From Page 1

in the CNMI.

Inos said the administration has not heard recently from an investor group from mainland China, which also earlier expressed interest in casino operation on Saipan.

The governor said in 10 days or so, the interested investors' names may be known once they start applying for the exclusive

casino license.

House Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan) has yet to sign off on a document transmitting to the governor a casino law amendment bill that the Legislature passed last week.

The governor said the major "fixes" to the original casino bill that became Public Law 18-38 are in the amendment bill but he said other amendments could be introduced later, based on what he heard from lawmakers' floor

debate last week.

Other issues about casino operations and security would be addressed through regulations that a casino commission would formulate and promulgate, he added.

The governor said he also expects the 2,000 guest rooms tied to the Saipan casino investment to be built in three years.

For a hotel with at least 2,000 rooms, some 1,200 employees are needed. But at this time, the U.S. Department of Labor has

yet to announce whether it will extend the CW program.

Inos said absent a decision on the CW extension, investors can always consider H visas.

"Every time we have a request on casino issue, we always lay on the table that we cannot guarantee labor but there are different scenarios. They're going to have to work with [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services] on that issue. What we do want is a lot of local employment and that's go-

ing to be the minimum. We are going to push for 2,000 rooms in three years," the governor told reporters during Friday's groundbreaking on the Kalabera Cave development project in Marpi.

As far as the location of the integrated casino resort, the governor said there were earlier interests in an area near LauLau Bay, as well as the current location of Hopwood Junior High School in San Antonio.

The latter, however, would

mean that the government has to provide public land to relocate the junior high school and for the investor to build a more modern school.

The investor can either hook up to the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. or generate its own power, and this would be included in the investor's business plan.

Inos said CUC has a capacity of some 78MW but the usage is only about 30MW, so "we got that reserve [power]."

KALABERA

From Page 1

the historic site's development project.

The governor and the Washington, D.C.-based officials led the ceremonial shoveling of dirt to mark the official start of the Kalabera Cave development project that the U.S. Department of the Interior is funding through the capital improvement projects program.

Inos said Kalabera Cave will finally get "the attention that it deserves," given the area's role

in the islands' history from the ancient times to the time right after World War II.

The governor and project manager Timothy R. Lang of TRL Architecture said the project will enhance sightseeing activities in the area with the installation of a viewing deck inside the cave and a ramp at the cave's entrance, along with the construction of a prayer or offering area, pictographic and petroglyph interpretive panels, a 4-ft. wide nature trail approximately 200 ft. long and landscaping in the surrounding areas, among other things.

At the groundbreaking ceremony, Pula said OIA is "pleased" that the development of Kalabera Cave is moving forward, given that tourism is now the CNMI's only major industry after the garment industry folded.

Faeth, for her part, said it's a "pleasure" and "honor" to take part in the groundbreaking of a development project that respects "historic and cultural resources." She added that it's a "special surprise" to have the groundbreaking during her first visit to the CNMI.

Faeth and Pula, along with

other CNMI officials, hiked from the site of the groundbreaking to the cave itself.

"This is beautiful," Faeth told officials while they were sightseeing inside the cave.

Former Historic Preservation Office employee John Reyes showed visitors to the cave samples of the petroglyphs or rock carvings and rock drawings in the cave. Reyes also gave them a history of the cave.

Pula suggested that the CNMI may look into installing a mirror that could allow cave visitors to see much deeper into the cave, while others suggested install-

ing solar-powered lighting system to light up the area for tours.

Local officials said the cave's actual depth has not been measured. Years after the war, World War II ordnance, human belongings, and skeletons were still retrieved 30 to 50 feet from the cave's entrance.

The Kalabera Cave development project, a part of the CNMI Destination Enhancement and Economic Plan, seeks to enhance the inside and surrounding areas of the cave.

The CIP Office under the governor's office said the development project could reach

almost \$940,000.

This includes \$601,612 for the civil works, miscellaneous concrete work, landscaping, railing and signage, as well as \$140,371 for the installation of a chain link fence, latte huts replica and a prayer house. At a later time, the CIP Office is expected to also award a contract for the construction of a parking lot, walkway markings, and wheel stoppers.

The project's architectural and engineering firm is SSFM-Saipan, while the construction contractor is USA Fanter Corp. Ltd.

LAWSUIT

From Page 1

The jury, however, found Kim liable to pay Quichocho and his law firm \$48,221.67 in legal fees.

Kim prevailed in her eight claims and was awarded a total of \$2,411,719.09.

The Quichochoes prevailed on only one (legal fees) of their five counter-claims against Kim.

The nine jurors reached a unanimous verdict Friday noon, their seventh day of deliberations.

The trial began on Feb. 3. It was filled with unexpected events such as Frances being taken to the hospital in an ambulance after fainting on her way to the courtroom for the continuation of her cross-examination, and one juror failing to show up for deliberations after being involved in a car accident.

After the verdict was announced, the Quichochoes refused to talk to the media and walked

straight to their vehicle, accompanied by Reps. Janet Maratita (Ind-Saipan) and Larry Guerrero (Ind-Saipan), Felipe Atalig, Jose Taisague, and several others.

Attorney Michael Dotts, counsel for the Quichochoes, said they're disappointed with the verdict and are considering their next step.

"We have to digest it [verdict] and look at appellate rights. The jury did spend a lot of time in considering it and we're appreciative of that. The court spent a lot of time with the case and we're appreciative of that," Dotts said. "We will see now what the next step is."

Dotts said they have 28 days to file motions for reconsideration and for new trial. Once the court rules on that, there are 30 more days to appeal to the U. S. Court of Appeal for the Ninth Circuit.

Kim was joined by her counsels, Colin Thompson and Robert T. Torres, outside the court to face reporters.

Thompson said the jury

worked hard and spent a lot of time sifting through the evidence. He said the verdict form was really complicated and that they're very pleased with the result.

"We think that Ms. Kim's claims are vindicated," he said.

Thompson said they will address the appeal when it comes up.

Torres said the theme of the case is simply about repairing the harm. "We feel that the jury understood that and the verdict speaks volumes to that," he said.

Torres said they appreciate the jury's hard work as RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization Act) is a difficult case to prove, much less for the jury to consider.

Torres said Kim has been vindicated in her complaint.

"We will walk out here appreciative of the jury's decision," said Torres in an interview with the media outside the courtroom.

As to question on how to collect the damages, Torres said they will present the Quichochoes with the judgment and that

the defendants have the obligation to satisfy them.

"The verdict is the judgment. Enforcing it and collecting it... obviously there may be some procedures, if necessary," Torres said.

Kim filed the lawsuit in 2009. She asserted eight claims against the Quichochoes and co-defendants: three counts of RICO, one count of legal malpractice: professional negligence, one count of legal malpractice: breach of fiduciary duty, one count of breach of lease, one count of conversion, and one count of fraud.

The Quichochoes, the law office, and Tan Dingo LLC, also filed counterclaims against Kim for conversion, interference with marital relationship, unjust enrichment, *quantum meruit*, and fraud.

The jury awarded Kim \$25,000 each for a total of \$75,000 on her three RICO claims.

The jury awarded Kim \$25,000 in damages for her legal

malpractice claim, \$48,221.67 in damages for her breach of fiduciary duty legal malpractice claim, and \$667,042 and \$1,551,828 in damages after finding that the Quichochoes took for themselves the ownership of Tan Dingo LLC and Latte Stone LLC, respectively.

The jury determined that the Quichochoes engaged in fraud and that Kim was the victim. The jury, however, did not award Kim damages or punitive damages on this claim.

The jury awarded Kim \$10,993.55 and \$10,083.87 in damages after finding that Quichocho's law office and Frances failed to pay rent on the office space lease and on the residential lease.

The jury awarded Kim \$23,550 for the removal of her property from the office space or the residential unit when the Quichochoes moved out from the building in San Jose.

With respect to Ramon Quichocho and his law firm's

attorney's fees claim based on *quantum meruit* and unjust enrichment, the jury sided with the Quichochoes and awarded them \$48,221.67.

The jury, however, sided with Kim on the Quichochoes' claim that Kim interfered with their marriage.

At the trial, Kim testified how the Quichochoes hijacked her companies, Tan Dingo and Latte Stone LLC. She also testified that her then counsel, Ramon Quichocho, raped her twice in 2008 while she was on medication due to depression and anxiety. She, however, admitted she also had consensual sex with Quichocho and also revealed that she and the Quichochoes twice had a threesome while she was drunk and under medication.

The Quichochoes also testified, denying the threesome. Ramon Quichocho also denied raping or having sex with Kim.

Frances claimed it was Kim who made sexual advances on her four times.

CW

From Page 1

Sablan's bluntest public statement so far states that the U.S. Department of Labor "has been unable, or unwilling to make a decision" for "14 months."

Gov. Eloy S. Inos himself "was hopeful that a decision would have been rendered by this time," press secretary Angel Demapan said yesterday, following the governor's meeting with Perez at a White House event in Washington, D.C. in February.

"Governor Inos echoes Congressman Kilili's request for an immediate decision on the CW extension," Demapan told *Saipan Tribune*.

Sablan introduced H.R. 4296, amending U.S. Public Law 94-

241, to extend the CNMI's immigration transition period by five years or up to Dec. 31, 2019. The bill has been referred to the U.S. House Committees on Natural Resources and Judiciary.

This is the same language contained in Sablan's Omnibus Territories Act or HR 2200 and its Senate companion, S. 1237. Sablan said both bills are moving slowly because they contain other changes to territorial law, some of which are controversial.

"So I have decided to improve chances of enacting the transition extension with a standalone bill, H.R. 4296. This is the same strategy that worked with the transfer of ownership of submerged lands," Sablan said.

By extending the transition period by five years, the CNMI's tourism industry will be protected "by preventing claims of asylum

in the Northern Marianas by persons who enter under parole status," he said.

Under U.S. law, the U.S. Labor secretary is required to make a decision by July 4 whether to extend the transitional Commonwealth-only worker program or let it end this year.

If a decision is made as late as July, that would only leave some five months for the CNMI to do the impossible. That is, to fill the 10,000 jobs that will be left vacant with U.S. workers right away and that means producing hundreds of experienced nurses, engineers, architects, teachers, certified public accountants, construction workers, hotel workers, and even caregivers.

This, at a time when new hotels, a Saipan casino, and other facilities will be built to meet

the tourism industry's growing demand.

Sablan said that waiting for the last minute to decide on the CNMI's requested CW extension leaves businesses uncertain whether they will have "an adequate number of workers" and make them invest less.

"Then there's the humanitarian concern...because waiting until the last minute leaves 9,617 foreign workers hanging in the breeze. Many of these people have lived in the Northern Marianas for decades. They have families and homes there. If they have to be gone by the end of this year, we owe them the courtesy of letting them know as soon as possible," Sablan told Perez at the U.S. House Education and Workforce Committee's hearing on U.S. Labor's fiscal year 2015

budget last week.

Sablan also reminded the U.S. Labor secretary that the annual number of foreign workers permitted is not the CNMI government's decision but that of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

For this year, DHS capped the number of foreign workers in the CNMI at 14,000.

"That's a long way from zero," Sablan said.

He said his office has also reached out to U.S. Labor, asking for technical assistance to the CNMI to train U.S. workers and prepare for the completion of the transition "in a way that keeps our economy whole and does not put the jobs of U.S. workers in that economy at risk."

"And the uncertainty—in the absence of your decision—is

not helping. I hope you will take my words to heart," Sablan told Perez at the committee hearing.

It was initially thought that the U.S. Labor secretary would decide last year. But in the past months, there were calls from certain sectors of the CNMI asking the federal government not to extend the CW program.

The CNMI House of Representatives also passed a resolution in November rejecting improved immigration status for long-term foreign workers in the CNMI, contained in both U.S. Senate and House bills on national immigration reforms.

Sablan, in an email, said when he met with Perez later in the afternoon after the congressional hearing, the Labor secretary did not give a specific reason why the department has not decided as quickly as he would like.

Two car crashes, no one injured

A van slammed into the rear of a pickup truck on Middle Road, while a van slewed off the road and plowed into a tree in Fina Sisu in separate accidents on Saturday and Wednesday.

Both drivers in the Middle Road accident complained of minor pain, while the driver in the Fina Sisu incident was not injured, police said.

Saturday's Middle Road incident involved a Nissan Quest with license plate ACN-668 and a Nissan pickup truck with license plate ABS-787.

Saipan Tribune learned that the Nissan Quest hit the rear of the Nissan pickup truck as the two vehicles were running south along Middle Road in front of Island Bath and Ceramics at about 3:40pm.

After hitting the pickup, the van continued running until it stopped several meters away near the Quartermaster Road

intersection.

The Nissan Quest sustained extensive damage in the front portion, while the pickup had extensive damage in the rear portion.

Wednesday's crash involved a silver Toyota Sienna van being driven by a woman.

Department of Public Safety police spokesman Travis Hurst said police officers responded to Chalan Antonio Apa Street in Fina Sisu on Wednesday at 9am.

Hurst said the driver, who was not injured, told police that she was traveling north on Chalan Antonio Apa Street when a vehicle suddenly exited from the Finasisu Terraces in front of her.

The van's driver tried to avoid a collision but failed to properly counter-steer and the van swerved off of the road, hitting a tree. The van had extensive damage. (Ferdie de la Torre)



Police Sgt. Juan Mendiola takes notes near the Nissan pickup truck that was hit in the rear by a Nissan Quest van along Middle Road Saturday afternoon.

Sentencing hearing of former senator Ayuyu resumes today

The sentencing hearing of former senator Juan M. Ayuyu will resume today, Monday, at 1pm.

The hearing was supposed to resume last March 17, but one of Ayuyu's counsel, Guam attorney David J. Lujan, asked the court to move the hearing to April 16 due to his busy court schedule in Guam.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona granted Lujan's request for postponement but set the sentencing hearing for today.

Both Lujan and attorney Bruce Berline, counsel for Ayuyu in the fruit bat case, recommend a probation sentence and no fine.

Berline said that Ayuyu has been an outstanding member of the community for many years and served the community well as a senator until a day came when a dying family member told him of wanting to eat a fruit bat before he passes away.

The sentencing hearing began last Feb. 10 but was not completed, prompting Manglona to continue the matter supposedly last March 17.

In Ayuyu's sentencing memorandum, Berline asked the court to impose a sentence of probation. Citing Ayuyu's financial circumstances, Berline also asked the court not to impose a fine.

Lujan, counsel for Ayuyu in the obstruction of justice case, joined in Berline's memorandum.

Ayuyu pleaded guilty to conspiring to violate the Endangered Species Act and conspiring to obstruct an official proceeding.

At the sentencing hearing last Feb. 10, assistant U.S. attorney Garth Backe called witnesses to testify as to the "true version of events," to show that Ayuyu does not deserve a reduced sentence. He recommends the highest end of the sentencing range: 41 months in prison.

"Such a sentence is not only appropriate here, but it will further send a clear message to others that, while the law applies to everyone, those that act like they are above it will be punished the most severely," said Backe in the U.S. government's sentencing memorandum.

Ayuyu's original sentencing date was Nov. 8, 2013, but was postponed several times for several reasons.

Last July 22, 2013, Ayuyu pleaded guilty. Subject to the court's approval, he will receive a prison term between 33 months and 41 months.

On Sept. 30, 2013, Ayuyu (Ind-Rota) resigned as a member of the 18th Senate. (Ferdie de la Torre)



BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Belated happy birthday to Grandpa Celso! May you have many more birthdays to come! We love you! Greetings from Julienne and Julia.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

HURRY IN TO GET SLAM DUNK DEALS! SALE ENDS April 5th!

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*On approved credit, some restrictions apply. Documentation and registration fees not included. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Vehicles may not be exactly as shown. Maximum credit card payment toward purchase is \$2500. Elantra total price is \$18,995 less 20% down payment. Financed at 5.75% APR for 60 monthly payments of \$292.02 or \$135 per paycheck based on 26 pay periods per year. Total deferred price is \$17,521.20. Tucson total price is \$21,995 less 20% down payment. Financed at 5.75% APR for 60 monthly payments of \$338.14 or \$156 per paycheck based on 26 pay periods per year. Total deferred price is \$20,288.40.

Bank of Hawaii Corporation and Subsidiaries			
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION			
At the Close of Business December 31, 2013 (dollars in thousands)			
ASSETS		LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY	
Interest-Bearing Deposits	\$ 3,617	Deposits	\$ 11,914,656
Investment Securities	6,988,216	Securities Sold Under	
Funds Sold	271,414	Agreements to Repurchase	770,049
Loans Held for Sale	6,435	Funds Purchased	9,982
Loans and Leases	6,095,387	Retirement Benefits Payable	34,965
Allowance for Loan and Lease Losses	(115,454)	Accrued Interest Payable	4,871
Net Loans and Leases	5,979,933	Taxes Payable and Deferred Taxes	34,907
		Other Liabilities	128,168
		Long-Term Debt	174,706
TOTAL EARNING ASSETS	13,249,615		
Cash and Noninterest-Bearing Deposits	188,715	TOTAL LIABILITIES	13,072,304
Premises and Equipment	108,636		
Accrued Interest Receivable	43,930	Shareholders' Equity	
Foreclosed Real Estate	3,205	Common Stock	572
Mortgage Servicing Rights	28,123	Capital Surplus	522,505
Goodwill	31,517	Accumulated Other	
Other Assets	430,539	Comprehensive Loss	(31,823)
		Retained Earnings	1,151,754
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 14,084,280	Treasury Stock, at Cost	(631,032)
		TOTAL SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY	1,011,976
		TOTAL LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY	\$ 14,084,280
BANK OF HAWAII - SAIPAN STATEMENT OF CONDITION			
At the Close of Business December 31, 2013 (dollars in thousands)			
ASSETS		LIABILITIES	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 2,035	Deposits	\$ 125,946
Loans, Net of Unearned Income	21,021	Accrued Interest Payable	7
Allowance for Loan Losses	(577)	Other Liabilities	32
Net Loans	20,444		
Accrued Interest Receivable	103	TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 125,985
Due from Head Office	102,980		
Premises and Equipment	214		
Other Assets	209		
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 125,985		
The audit reports of Bank of Hawaii Corporation and Bank of Hawaii - Saipan Branches are available for public review at the Office of the Director of Banking, Department of Commerce, Capital Hill, Saipan.			
MEMBER FDIC			

Inos signs new law for DLNR to manage submerged lands

Gov. Eloy S. Inos signed a new law on Thursday giving the Department of Lands and Natural Resources authority to manage submerged lands 3 miles off the Commonwealth's coast, six months after President Barack Obama conveyed these submerged lands to the CNMI through U.S. Public Law 113-34.

The governor signed Senate floor leader Ray Yumul's (Ind-Saipan) Senate Bill 18-38 into Public Law 18-42.

This also establishes by law Managaha Island's protection, preservation, and maintenance of public access. That authority to manage Managaha by law also rests with DLNR, in consultation with the Department of Public Lands.

Yumul said yesterday he appreciates the governor's signing of his SB 18-38 into law.

The new law also authorizes the DLNR secretary to promul-

gate necessary regulations to carry out its duties.

Obama's September signing of U.S. PL 113-34 conveyed 3-mile submerged lands to the CNMI, which became the last U.S. coastal state or territory to own its offshore lands. That law was a result of Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's (Ind-MP) request to U.S. Sens. Ron Wyden and Lisa Murkowski to introduce S. 256.

In January, however, Obama held off conveying submerged lands surrounding five of the CNMI's 14 islands that are either part of a national marine monument or under lease to the U.S. military.

On March 13, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell conveyed oil, gas, and mineral deposit rights found in the 3-mile submerged lands to the CNMI. On March 27, Inos accepted on behalf of the CNMI people the patent conveying these mineral rights

to the Commonwealth, in the presence of acting U.S. Interior assistant secretary Sally Jewell, who hand-delivered the patent from Washington, D.C. to Saipan.

MVA board nominations

In other news, the governor re-nominated on Thursday Kwang Joong Kim to the Marianas Visitors Authority board of directors, and appointed Juan Ogo Barcinas also to serve on the MVA board.

Their appointments require the Senate's advice and consent.

Kim represents Saipan business on the MVA board. If confirmed, Kim will serve another four-year term expiring on March 16, 2018.

Once confirmed by the Senate, Ogo will serve the MVA board—representing Tinian—for four years commencing on the date of his confirmation. *(Haidee V. Eugenio)*

Job Vacancy Announcement

Strategic Gaming Solutions, Inc. has immediate job openings for the following positions:

Gaming Cage Worker (12)

Position Summary: Conduct financial transactions for patrons and guests. Follow all cash desk regulations. Participate in the soft count as required. Ensure that the cash desk float balances during and at the end of shift; reconcile daily summaries of transactions to balance books. Maintain cage security. Maintain confidentiality of customers' transactions. Use cash register or computer to record transactions.

Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 2 years work experience as a gaming cage worker or work experience at a gaming establishment cash desk operations or any combination of experience, education and/or training where financial transactions for patrons/guest skills are demonstrated or willing to undergo in-house training. Ability to communicate effectively with guests, team members and management in both written and verbal form, Ability to handle multiple tasks. Must demonstrate true passion to serve guests. Must have strong team work skills. Must be willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Highly motivated, organized, outgoing, with excellent communication and leadership skills an advantage.

Surveillance Operator (12)

Position Summary: Responsible for video observation of all aspects of the e-gaming/digital lounge operation and the reporting of all irregular or illegal activities.

Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 2 years work experience as a surveillance operator or investigator or any combination of experience, education and/or training in video surveillance and/or related investigations into all casino/e-gaming lounge related activities including accounting, gaming machines, change booths, cashiering operations, count rooms, or wagering areas. Knowledge of gaming internal control procedures, CCTV and security management systems. Ability to communicate effectively with guests, team members and management in both written and verbal form, Ability to handle multiple tasks. Must demonstrate true passion to serve guests. Must have strong team work skills. Must be willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Highly motivated, organized, outgoing, with excellent communication and leadership skills an advantage.

Security Officer (12)

Position Summary: Responsible for the safety and well being of guests and fellow employees and protection of company property. Regularly provides escorts of money and persons in money-handling positions. Patrols all sections of property to identify safety hazards and breaks in security. Enforces all company policies and procedures. Maintains and enforces internal security regulations.

Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 2 years work experience as a security or police officer or investigator or any combination of experience, education and/or training in video surveillance and/or related investigations into all e-gaming lounge related activities including accounting, gaming machines, change booths, cashiering operations, count rooms, or wagering areas. Knowledge of gaming internal control procedures, CCTV and security management systems. Ability to communicate effectively with guests, team members and management in both written and verbal form, Ability to handle multiple tasks. Must demonstrate true passion to serve guests. Must have strong team work skills. Must be willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Highly motivated, organized, outgoing, with excellent communication and leadership skills an advantage.

Bartender (3)

Position Summary: Responsible for operating and maintaining the e-gaming/digital lounge bar during the shift ensuring that the bar, equipment and stock are maintained and cleaned. Ensure that all stock levels are adequate. Mix and serve drinks to patrons, directly or through waitstaff

Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 1 year work experience as a bartender. Must be energetic with an excellent track record in hospitality and who thrives in a fast-paced service environment. Must have in depth knowledge about wines, spirits, cocktails and other drink ingredients. Ability to communicate effectively with guests, team members and management in both written and verbal form, Ability to handle multiple tasks. Must demonstrate true passion to serve guests. Must have strong team work skills. Must be willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Highly motivated, organized, outgoing, with excellent communication and leadership skills an advantage.

Cleaner (2)

Position Summary: Responsible for cleaning of the gaming floor, lounge and all other areas of the club premises. Maintain the club presenting a clean and presentable appearance.

Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 1 year work experience as a cleaner preferably in a gaming establishment or hotel. Must be energetic with an excellent track record in hospitality and who thrives in a fast-paced service environment. Ability to handle multiple tasks. Must have strong team work skills. Must be willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Highly motivated, organized, outgoing, with excellent communication skills an advantage.

Driver (2)


Position Summary: Responsible for driving company, assigned or courtesy vehicles to transport guests and customers in a safe, efficient and polite manner; arrange to pick up customers or guests on a regular schedule. Liaise with the guest services/marketing supervisor and hotel regarding accommodation and transport of guests and customer.

Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 2 year experience working as a driver. Must have a commercial driver's license or equivalent with the ability to drive a commercial bus and courtesy van or car. Must be energetic with an excellent track record in hospitality and who thrives in a fast-paced service environment. Ability to communicate effectively with guests, team members and management in both written and verbal form. Ability to handle multiple tasks. Must demonstrate true passion to serve guests. Must have strong team work skills. Must be willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Highly motivated, organized, outgoing with excellent communication skills an advantage.

Compensation: All positions will be filled and paid at a rate commensurate with qualification, work experience, and ability to perform.

Job Location: Saipan and at all offices or e-gaming/digital gaming lounges of the corporation.

Application: Applications may be obtained from the Mita Travel, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan. The detailed job description & KSA and benefits for each position is available for review by applicants. Deadline for submission of completed applications is Monday, March 31, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD

P.O. Box 502078, #1242 Pohnpei Court

Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

Tel No: (670)664-4809 Fax: (670)664-4814 • Email: bpl@pticom.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD (HCPLB)

Public Law No. 15-105, taken into effect on November 7, 2007, established the Health Care Professions Licensing Board as an independent regulatory agency authorized to license health care professionals in the Commonwealth, establish standards for educational programs, administer exams, and to discipline licensees for violations of the law. See 3 CMC §§ 2201-2236.

In accordance with 3 CMC §2204, the Health Care Professions Licensing Board ("the Health Care Board") has the complete jurisdiction, power, authority and duty to license and regulate all health care professions in the Commonwealth, except for the practice of nursing. See also 3 CMC §2212. The Health Care Board has established rules, regulations and/or licensing requirements for the practice of the following listed health care professions:

Acupuncturists	Chiropractors
Baccalaureate Social Workers	Masters Social Workers
Clinical Social Workers	Medical Laboratory Technicians
Radiologic Technicians	Dentists
Dental Hygienists	Dental Therapists
Dental Assistants	Embalmers
EMTS/Paramedics	Midwives
Optometrists	Pharmacists
Pharmacy Interns	Physical Therapists
Pharmacy Technicians	Physical Therapy Assistants
Physicians	Physician Assistants
Podiatrists	Professional Counselors
Mental Health Counselors	Mental Health Counselor Associates
Psychologists (Clinical)	

Beyond regulating the above-listed professions, the Health Care Board regulates and issues licenses to operate clinical/medical laboratories and pharmacies. Further, the Health Care Board has the authority to regulate, and will soon be doing so, the practice of Audiologists, Occupational Therapists, Respiratory Therapists, Speech and Language Pathologists and any other health care professions in the Commonwealth, except for the practice of nursing. See 3 CMC §§2204, 2212.

Pursuant to 3 CMC §2215(b), no person shall practice any health profession mentioned above in the Commonwealth without a valid, duly issued license from the Health Care Board. Further, under 3 CMC §2224, the Health Care Board may discipline a person or licensee for reasons which include, but is not limited to:

- Engaging in dishonorable, unethical or unprofessional conduct of a character likely to mislead, deceive, defraud or harm the public with respect to a health care profession. 3 CMC §2224(b)(3).
- Negligence, incompetence or misconduct in the practice of a health care profession. 3 CMC §2224(b)(4).
- Making a false, fraudulent, deceptive or misleading statement in advertising. 3 CMC §2224(b)(9)(ii).
- Persistent, deliberate over-charging or over-treating of patients. 3 CMC §2224(b)(15).
- Without having a valid license from the board, using any health care profession titles, or modifications, derivatives, or acronyms thereof, in the individual or firm name, or in any title, sign, card, ad, electronic communication, or other device to indicate that the person is practicing a regulated health care profession. 3 CMC §2224(b)(21).

If you have any questions or concerns about the licensure and regulation of health care professions in the Commonwealth, please do not hesitate to contact the Health Care Board at (670) 664-4809, by email at bpl@pticom.com, or come by our office located at Bldg. 1242, Pohnpei Ctr., Capitol Hill, Saipan.

OIA upbeat about CHC, reservations on CUC

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Visiting officials of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs walked away impressed with the progress and changes seen at the public hospital, while admitting that they have a number of questions about the islands' utilities company.

Acting Assistant Secretary for Insular Area Lori Faeth and OIA Director Nik Pula told *Saipan Tribune* last week that besides the Executive Branch, they

also had a series of meetings on Thursday and Friday with other agencies that OIA has aided: the Public School System, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., and the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., among others.

"I would say that we're encouraged by the progress they have made in the public hospital and we've seen the commitment to continue to go forward at this time," said Faeth after emerging from Thursday morning's meeting and a walkthrough at the hospital.

Woman gets 42-day sentence for possession of 'ice' residue

Remedio P. Islam, a female ex-convict who was accused of possessing 9.6 gross grams of marijuana and a glass paraphernalia that contained methamphetamine or "ice" residue, pleaded guilty last week and was slapped with a 42-day prison term.

Islam pleaded guilty to illegal possession of a controlled substance as part of a plea agreement with the government.

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo sentenced Islam to 42 days in prison without parole, with credit for 28 days of time served.

She was required to report to the Department of Corrections on April 15, 2014, to serve the remainder of her sentence. She will be released on April 29, 2014.

Islam was ordered to pay a \$2,000 fine and \$100 court assessment fee.

According to the plea deal, Islam was found in possession of materials containing a residue of crystal methamphetamine on April 11, 2013, on Saipan.

Assistant attorney general

Margo Brown-Badawy represented the government in the case. Chief public defender Douglas Hartig served as counsel for Islam.

Police arrested the 46-year-old Islam in April 2013.

When a police officer asked her who owns the six baggies containing green leafy substances that were seized from her, Islam allegedly replied, "Me, doll. I like to smoke marijuana."

Police detective Flora Danica B. Aguon stated in her report that she arrested Islam as she and other detectives were executing a search warrant for another defendant in San Antonio.

Aguon said Islam was in possession of a bag that contained six baggies of green leafy substances and other drug paraphernalia.

Aguon said the field test indicated that the green substance was positive for marijuana, while the residue in the glass was positive for methamphetamine or "ice."

Islam was imprisoned in 1996 for drug related crimes. **(Ferdie de la Torre)**

She praised the corporation for the actions it has taken to rectify the concerns and deficiencies cited by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. OIA sent a "90-day mission team" to the hospital last year and funded the 11-member commissioned corps that helped the hospital address many CMS concerns.

CMS's decision on the hospital's Condition of Participation is expected in June this year.

If Faeth felt positive about the hospital, Pula admits that OIA has some questions for CUC related to a number of issues that include projects, operations, and others.

OIA has funded and continues to fund multiple projects for CUC to satisfy the requirements

of two federal stipulated orders. The federal officials had a closed door meeting with CUC last Friday.

"I know that everybody is struggling [with the high power rates] because of the cash flow problem of the utilities agency. I understand that the hospital, government, and public schools owe CUC too. Hotels are also

being encouraged to go back to the grid. These are some issues that we need to hear from CUC. So obviously, I've got a lot of questions to make and I will find the answers in our meeting [Friday]," Pula told *Saipan Tribune*.

Pula and Faeth met Thursday noon with local education leaders and walked away satisfied and

impressed with what they heard. The idea of making PSS a role model for Micronesian school districts was affirmed by Faeth.

"Though I really don't have much exposure [to the public school system], I am impressed by the commitment to children and the accomplishments they made, particularly in the last three years. I can say I walked away impressed and I think they will be a good model [for the region]," Faeth said.

3 US Pacific territories to benefit from restoration funds

American Samoa, Guam, and the CNMI have been allocated more than \$7 million for wildlife restoration and sports fish restoration funds.

The allocation is part of a nearly \$1.1 billion in excise tax revenues paid by sportsmen and sportswomen to state and terri-

torial fish and wildlife agencies to fund fish and wildlife conservation and recreation projects across the U.S.

The money is distributed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to all 50 states and territories through the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration

and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration programs.

According to the distribution list, American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands will each receive during fiscal year 2014 more than 2.3 million dollars to conserve fish and wildlife resources. **(RNZI)**

Your Baby at 9 Months



Child's Name

Child's Age

Today's Date

How your child plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

Check the milestones your child has reached by the end of 9 months. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Babies Do at this Age:

Social/Emotional

- ☐ May be afraid of strangers
- ☐ May be clingy with familiar adults
- ☐ Has favorite toys

Language/Communication

- ☐ Understands "no"
- ☐ Makes a lot of different sounds like "mamamama" and "bababababa"
- ☐ Copies sounds and gestures of others
- ☐ Uses fingers to point at things

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- ☐ Watches the path of something as it falls
- ☐ Looks for things he sees you hide
- ☐ Plays peek-a-boo
- ☐ Puts things in her mouth
- ☐ Moves things smoothly from one hand to the other
- ☐ Picks up things like cereal o's between thumb and index finger

Movement/Physical Development

- ☐ Stands, holding on
- ☐ Can get into sitting position
- ☐ Sits without support
- ☐ Pulls to stand
- ☐ Crawls

Act Early by Talking to Your Child's Doctor if Your Child:

- ☐ Doesn't bear weight on legs with support
- ☐ Doesn't sit with help
- ☐ Doesn't babble ("mama", "baba", "dada")
- ☐ Doesn't play any games involving back-and-forth play
- ☐ Doesn't respond to own name
- ☐ Doesn't seem to recognize familiar people
- ☐ Doesn't look where you point
- ☐ Doesn't transfer toys from one hand to the other

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay for this age, and talk with someone in your community who is familiar with services for young children in your area, such as your state's public early intervention program. For more information, go to www.cdc.gov/concerned or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children be screened for general development at the 9-month visit. Ask your child's doctor about your child's developmental screening.

Adapted from CARING FOR YOUR BABY AND YOUNG CHILD: BIRTH TO AGE 5, Fifth Edition, edited by Steven Shelov and Tanya Remer Altmann © 1991, 1993, 1998, 2004, 2009 by the American Academy of Pediatrics and BRIGHT FUTURES: GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH SUPERVISION OF INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND ADOLESCENTS, Third Edition, edited by Joseph Hagan, Jr., Judith S. Shaw, and Paula M. Duncan, 2008, Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics. This milestone checklist is not a substitute for a standardized, validated developmental screening tool.

HOW IS YOUR BABY GROWING?

If you have any concerns about your child's development, contact the Children's Developmental Assistance Center (CDAC) at 664-4830

Printing funded by the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Grant.



www.cdc.gov/actearly | 1-800-CDC-INFO



Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Michael A. White, Esq. F0122
The Law Offices of
Michael A. White, LLC
Post Office Box 5222
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950
Tel: (670) 234-6547
Fax: (670) 234-9537

Attorneys for Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION, Plaintiff
-v-
ALFONSINA M. ARJU and ARJU ARJU, Defendants.

SECOND AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on September 10, 2012, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: Lot No. 045 A 031, situated in As Matius, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 1,123 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 045 A 003 dated July 12, 1989, Commonwealth Recorder's File No. 93-1038, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, April 11, 2014, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 6th day of March, 2014:

/s/MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

Michael A. White, Esq. F0122
The Law Offices of
Michael A. White, LLC
Post Office Box 5222
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950
Tel: (670) 234-6547
Fax: (670) 234-9537

Attorneys for Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION, Plaintiff
-v-
ESTEBAN SARALU BUEKIS and KIKIKO K. BUEKIS, Defendants.

SECOND AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on May 15, 2012, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: Lot No. 011 G 1243, situated in Kagman III, Phase IV, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 948 square meters, more or less, as shown on DLS Check No. 011 G 23 dated December 9, 1993, Commonwealth Recorder's File No. 96-2566, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, April 11, 2014, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 6th day of March, 2014:

/s/MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Family grief support meeting on April 3

A group that is in the process of forming a Compassionate Friends chapter on Saipan will be holding their monthly grief support meeting on Thursday, April 3, from 6pm to 7:30pm, in the NMPASI conference room on Middle Road, in Gualo Rai. For more information, call Jill Derickson at 989-9821 or e-mail jilld@pticom.com. To learn more about The Compassionate Friends, visit their website at www.compassionatefriends.org. (PR)

Navy requests assistance to stop Guam fires

PITI, Guam—The U.S. Navy is requesting that anyone who has information on recent fires on or near military property on

Guam to call the Naval Criminal Investigative Service at 339-7220. Federal firefighters have



DONATION OF SUPPLIES CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Kagman High School sends big thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Quinata for their generous donation of toilet paper to Kagman High School. Mr. Q is a Dolphin at heart, but wanted to reach out to the Ayuyu's after seeing the news report about their struggles to provide enough consumable supplies at the school. The Ayuyus send their biggest *si'yu'us ma'ase* your way!

L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. Is inviting qualifies individuals to apply for the following position:

Accountant
Associate's Degree in Finance or Accounting with at least 3 years work related experience in financial management and/or payroll and general accounting procedures with emphasis on receivables and payable management. Proficient in the use of SAP R3 FICO system and MS Excel, Word and Power Point software. Must be able to work under time pressure and must work flexible hours. CPA not required.

Applications can be obtained and submitted at L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. office located on the 2nd Floor, JP Center Building at Beach Road, Garapan. Salaries will commensurate with qualifications and experience. To be considered, applications must be submitted no later than 5:00pm, April 03, 2014.

L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. is an Equal Opportunity Employer.
Qualified women, minorities and disabled persons are encouraged to apply.

fought multiple fires over the past year that have put at risk Navy military and civilian personnel, facilities, and critical infrastructure. There is a growing concern that the fires may have been set intentionally. (PR)

Air Force training on Farallon de Medinilla

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Air Force will conduct training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla on the following dates and times:

- April 2-3, from 7pm to 11:59pm
- April 4, from 1pm to 6pm

The general public especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators are advised to stay clear from the area during the times and dates indicated.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla training area will be on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants. (PR)

OPA staff on Tinian, Rota for filings

Staff of the Office of the Public Auditor will be on Rota on Tuesday, April 8, 2014, and on Tinian on Thursday, April 10, 2014, to notarize and accept last-minute filings of financial disclosure statements from government officials. Filers on Rota may visit the Rota Mayor's Office on April 8 from 10:30am to 4pm. Filers on Tinian may visit the Tinian Mayor's Office on April 10 from 10:30am to 3:30pm. All filers are reminded to bring with them some form of photo identification, such as a driver's license or a passport. Failure to do so may result in the denial of notary services. For any inquiries or comments, contact OPA at 322-6481 or 6482. (OPA)

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

March 31, 2006

Admin OK'd filling of 308 govt posts
The Fitial administration has certified over 300 vacant positions in government since taking office nearly three months ago. Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez made the certifications in numerous letters to the Legislature between Jan. 30 and March 16, 2006. The letters state that the positions are "vacant and must be filled during the period of our present continuing resolution." "The filling of this vacant position [or positions] is of vital importance for the efficient delivery of essential public services. Continuing appropriations are available for the full personnel costs associated with this vacancy," the letters stated.

Taga Air dreams big for Tinian
"Look around Tinian now. In 18 months, Tinian will never be the same again." Thus said Gov. Benigno R. Fitial before government officials, businessmen and guests during Wednesday night's dinner that was hosted by Taga Air to celebrate the recent granting of certification that would allow it to expand its fleet. Jubilant spirits filled Taga Air's hangar within the West Tinian International Airport as glittering confetti rained down after Fitial and the mayors of Tinian, Rota and Saipan—Jose San Nicolas, Joseph Inos and Juan Borja Tudela—together with the company's officers led by director Michael Kwan, officially cut the ribbon in celebration of the air carrier's new certification. Kwan assured that Taga Air will expand its services to help boost traffic within the islands. He said they will add new charter services to Rota and eventually become an international airline that will bring in direct flights to Tinian.

March 31, 2007

'Judiciary nearing its limit'
Chief Justice Miguel S. Demapan said yesterday that the Judiciary is "fast approaching the threshold" beyond which it cannot continue to function due to the economic crisis that necessitates cost-cutting measures. "While the Judiciary will continue to do all it can to reduce spending, there is a point beyond which we will not be able to function," said Demapan in his State of the Judiciary address he delivered during a joint legislative session at the House of Representatives' chamber on Capital Hill. "I am unable to quote you a specific dollar amount representing this limit, but I can assure you it is not far away," Demapan added.

Injured cow abandoned in front of animal hospital
A cow with a broken leg—possibly sustained after being hit by a car—was abandoned in front of an animal hospital in Chalan Laulau yesterday morning. The bloodied cow, weighing about 600 lbs, was tied to a utility pole located in front of Paradise Island Animal Hospital Inc. Edgar G. Tudor, a veterinarian who owns Paradise Island Animal Hospital, told *Saipan Tribune* he saw the cow tied to the utility pole when came to work at 7:30am. Tudor said the cow has a broken leg. He surmised it was probably hit by a car and the unidentified owner loaded it on a trail and abandoned it in front of his hospital.

March 31, 2008

200 crashes a month in '07
With car crashes—traffic and non-traffic—averaging more than 200 per month last year, the Department of Public Safety Traffic division will be ramping up its enforcement duties starting tomorrow, April 1. Errant drivers beware as April Fools Day will kick off DPS Traffic's monthlong campaign to go back to the basics of keeping the Commonwealth's streets and highways safe with about 20 checkpoints planned, according to newly designated Traffic OIC Sgt. Tom Blas.

Cost to repair power plants: \$9.8M
The cost of repairing the Saipan power plants has reached nearly \$10 million. According to a report by the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., a major contract of \$5.1 million has been awarded to the Guam-based DCM Group to rehabilitate seven of the eight generators at the main power plant in Lower Base. Local funds will be used to pay for the contract. An additional \$4.7 million worth of contracts has been awarded to several other firms involved in the power plant repair. Of this amount, \$2.87 million will be funded by federal grants and the remaining \$1.84 million will be funded by local money.

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Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-7859
Fax: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Plaintiff

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

**MARIANAS PUBLIC LAND TRUST,
Plaintiff,**

vs.

**EDWARD SN. MUÑA,
Defendant.**

Civil Action
No. 12-0275

**NOTICE OF
AUCTION
and
JUDICIAL SALE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that under and by virtue of a judgment made and entered in the above titled action on the 24th day of May, 2013, by the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, to satisfy the amount found and adjudged due Plaintiff in the above titled action from Defendant, as prescribed in the Order Approving Judicial Sale of Mortgaged Property, the undersigned counsel or his designee will sell at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the 11th day of April, 2014 at 10 a.m., at the Marianas Public Land Trust Conference Room, Capitol Hill, Saipan, the premises and real estate, lying and being on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, described in said judgment, to wit:

Lot/Tract No. 011 G 701, containing an area of 845 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 011 G 14, the original of which was recorded on December 3, 1993 as Document No. 93-4182 at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office, Saipan.

Terms and Conditions of Sale.

1. **Rights and duties of Auctioneer.** Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales with reserve, the auctioneer or his designee shall have the following rights and duties in conducting the auction sale:

- a) to withdraw the property listed for sale in the public announcement before sale or before a bid for such property is accepted;
- b) to adjourn the sale without notice at any time before any specific property is sold, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and
- c) to reject any and all bids.

2. **Bids.** Tentative bids may be submitted in advance for any and all of the property listed in the notice. Such bids shall not be binding, except that the highest of such bids will automatically be considered the opening bid for the property. Bids may be entered in person, in writing, or by telephone to Robert T. Torres, Attorney at Law, Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950, Phone: 670-234-7859; Fax: 670-234-5749; Email: rttlaw@pticom.com.

3. **Deposit and Payment.** A deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. The remaining balance will be due within ten days of the auction sale. All payments must be made by cash, cashier's check, or money order. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within ten days will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the 10% deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title and interest in any of the property will revert to Marianas Public Land Trust.

4. **Change of Terms.** Auctioneer and Marianas Public Land Trust reserve the right to change any of the terms of conduct an enforcement of sale by announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause shall be binding on any buyer by constructive notice.

5. **Inspection and No Warranty.** Bidders are cautioned to inspect the title and property. Contact the Law Office of Robert T. Torres for scheduled viewing and inspection times. The interests of the property are being sold "AS IS" and without warranty. Failure to inspect the real property will not constitute a ground for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer.

DATED this 12th day of February, 2014.

/s/
Robert T. Torres, Auctioneer

Robert Tenorio Torres
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms
(Chalan Kiya)
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Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-7859
Fax: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Plaintiff

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR
THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

**BANK OF GUAM,
Plaintiff**

vs.

**JOSE T. PANGELINAN,
Defendant.**

Civil Action
No. 13-0103

**AMENDED
NOTICE
OF HEARING
ON PLAINTIFF'S
MOTION FOR
DEFAULT
JUDGMENT**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on May 13, 2014 at 9:00 a.m., a hearing will be held before Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo on Plaintiff's Motion for Default Judgment in the above-captioned matter, at the Superior Court for the CNMI, Guma Hustisia, Civic Center, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Respectfully submitted this 17th day of March, 2014.

/s/ CLERK OF COURT

Robert Tenorio Torres
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms
(Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-7859
Fax: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Plaintiff

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

**BANK OF GUAM,
Plaintiff**

vs.

**MOHAMMED YASIN,
Defendant.**

Civil Action
No. 14-0032

**AMENDED
SUMMONS**

**TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANT:
MOHAMMED YASIN**

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED AND NOTIFIED to file an answer you wish to make to the COMPLAINT within twenty (20) days after service of this AMENDED SUMMONS upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to Robert Tenorio Torres, Attorney at Law, P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950, or as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Court of the above-entitled Court for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Office of the Clerk of Court, CNMI Superior Court, 1st Floor, Guma' Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House of Justice, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan, MP 96950-0307. It may be prepared and signed for you by your attorney and sent to the Clerk of Court by messenger or by mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this AMENDED SUMMONS, judgment by default pursuant to the court rules of the above-entitled Court may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

SO ORDERED on this 21st day of March, 2014.

/s/ CLERK OF COURT

Robert Tenorio Torres
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms
(Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-7859
Fax: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Plaintiff

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

**BANK OF GUAM,
Plaintiff,**

vs.

**VICTORIA SN. BORJA,
Defendant.**

CIVIL ACTION
No. 14-0034

**AMENDED
SUMMONS**

**TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANT:
VICTORIA SN. BORJA**

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED AND NOTIFIED to file an answer you wish to make to the COMPLAINT within twenty (20) days after service of this AMENDED SUMMONS upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to Robert Tenorio Torres, Attorney at Law, P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950, or as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Court of the above-entitled Court for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Office of the Clerk of Court, CNMI Superior Court, 1st Floor, Guma' Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House of Justice, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan, MP 96950-0307. It may be prepared and signed for you by your attorney and sent to the Clerk of Court by messenger or by mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this AMENDED SUMMONS, judgment by default pursuant to the court rules of the above-entitled Court may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

SO ORDERED on this 19th day of March, 2014.

/s/ KRISTY DIAZ
DEPUTY CLERK I

April is ALCOHOL AWARENESS Month!

**Adults, Drink
Responsibly.**

**NEVER
Drink & Drive.**

Talk
to your kids about
the dangers of
alcohol.

**Know the
FACTS!**

Know how much is too much.....

BINGE DRINKING is considered more than **5 drinks for MALES** & more than **4 drinks for FEMALES**, in one sitting over a couple of hours.

Know the consequences..... Binge drinking or abusing alcohol can lead to domestic violence, sexual assault, unintentional injury, poor school/work conduct, crime, physical effects on the body and even death!

Know why the drinking age is

21..... The human brain is not fully developed until the ages of 20 – 25 years old. Youth who begin drinking early have a greater chance of being alcohol dependent later in life!

Know the law..... It does not matter when or where, if your child is caught drinking alcohol, BOTH the parents/guardians and the child could be fined \$1,000! And that's just for the first offense

Alcohol is a luxury item for adults to enjoy, not abuse....

**Let's Be A Safe & Healthy CNMI
This Month.....& Every Month!**

For more information about Substance Abuse Prevention in the CNMI, contact Project Brabu at (670) 323-6560/61 or email projectbrabu.marketing@gmail.com



Opinion

Hafa Adair!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Gun madness in Georgia

Fifteen months ago, as the nation recoiled in horror from the massacre of 20 children and six adults by a mentally ill man armed with three semiautomatic weapons, there were firm proclamations that this time would be different. The violence at that Newtown, Conn., elementary school, it was said, would finally lead the nation to come together and embrace some reasonable gun control laws.

Well, that didn't last long. If anything, the national gun frenzy, fueled by the irresponsible lobbyists at the National Rifle Association, has intensified. Though some states have adopted laws tightening access to guns since Newtown, others have actually loosened their gun control regulations.

The latest state to move in the wrong direction is Georgia, where the Legislature last week approved the most extreme—indeed bizarre—set of gun laws in the nation. The bill is awaiting the governor's signature.

Among the law's absurdities: People with gun permits would be allowed to carry their weapons in unsecured areas of airports. It would allow loaded guns in bars (South Carolina recently approved that as well), unless the owner of the bar specifically objects. In some cases, guns could be brought into churches. The law would offer an "absolute defense" if a gun was used in the face of a violent attack, though it doesn't appear to define exactly what constitutes a violent act. Georgia is already a "stand your ground" state. So envision this scenario: A gun-toting Georgian tries to enter a bar that bans guns and is confronted by a bouncer. Who, incidentally, may also be armed under the new law. You can imagine how that might play out.

This page has been firm in its opposition to the NRA's abject disdain of the public good in pursuing its warped view of the 2nd Amendment's right to bear arms and its bullying approach to the political process. But the blame for this national insanity should not be placed entirely on the NRA. Politicians respond to the group's pressure out of fear, knowing that their jobs often depend on low-turnout, one-party primaries in which fringe passions are amplified.

At the same time, public opinion has taken a puzzling, and depressing, turn. According to Gallup, in the weeks after the Newtown massacre, support for stricter gun control rose to 58 percent. By last October, it had ebbed to 49 percent.

To twist a cliché, with that attitude we—and Georgia—are getting the gun laws we deserve. But the next time an avoidable killing occurs in Georgia, an awful lot of people are going to have gunpowder residue mixed in with the blood on their hands.

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Marching out of March madness

What is traditionally March madness in temperate Europe and western Asia is the gay proliferation of hares in the countryside. The hare, a cousin to the rabbit but with larger ears and longer legs, is nocturnal in habits save in the spring when it frolics above ground, chasing another to mate and bringing off its offspring on the ground rather than in burrows, inspiring the English idiom of "mad as a March hare."

Outside my tenement apartment in Daoyi, Shenbei in Shenyang, China, is a "broken-down" children's playground with a couple of the residents' cars and/or vans regularly parked in the play area. Leavings from construction, maintenance and repairs, and the regular home trash are dumped around the electrical posts with the ubiquitous plastered signs that everyone seems to tolerate. With my penchant to carry a scraper and stop by unsightly plastered ads along the way, even with the sore right shoulder reminding me that, perhaps, I've been doing too much of it of late, I am in my elements.

Well, the knees insist on keeping the second long Johns on, but what had been a long November to March of cold weather, the sun suddenly came out, and in a couple of days, the cherry blossoms in the playground popped open. The local government bulldozer and truck came around to scrape the trash, and voila, my neighbors' gait had the spritz of the European hare!

March madness in America is often NCAA basketball's end, and though we are now down to the elite eight, we will be into April before we hit the Final Four. The madness of the two main events in the global scene this month—the Russians in Crimea and the mystery of MH370—dominated consciousness and frayed nerves. A third sudden bloomer is China's Xi Jin Ping's measured strides into EU, grandiosely avoiding taking sides in the Russia-EU/USA "legal" conflict played out in the UN General Assembly.

The disintegration of the old Ukraine revealed the deep hypocrisy of the EU-USA axis and the foxy smarts of Putin, albeit with just a dab too much touch of arrogance. However, to watch President Obama mouth defensive pronouncements under the cloak of legality and constitutionality, and catching Hillary off-guard characterizing Putin as a Hitler, indicated that their buttons had been pushed. From my view, in principle, Russia is off the traditionally acceptable path, but in practicality, it is dead on center!

Russia west of the Urals is Europe. Belarus and Ukraine south were central to the Kievan Rus, and the Russian Empire. Transcaucasia joined in the formation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics whose center could not hold in 1991 with the rise of nationalist ethos in response to Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika*. With the last legally elected President of Ukraine suggesting a ref-

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com.



erendum of regions in Ukraine rather than a hasty presidential election to hold a Kiev-dominated nation is more realistic than a refuge to the nebulous claim to constitutionality. It is not too far fetched to transpose the Ukrainian situation to the continuing disintegration of the Thai constitutional monarchy.

However one looks at the situation, the Ukrainian and Thai situations, among many post-WWII neo-colonial geographical configurations, are simply the planets' people adjusting to reality.

The sad fate of MH370 is another of the fine madness this March that is revealing a realistic truth. First, the practicality of a need defined the unconditional cooperation of 26 nations in a common effort. Logistics defined collaboration rather than the niceties of law and ideology.

Second, we discovered an alarming truth. With all the sightings of debris across a wide swath of the planet's ocean, it confirmed what we already know in the Pacific. The earth's fluid surface is one body of plastic soup! We are not just talking of small stuff. Huge bodies of waste, perhaps consigned for the incinerator, had been conveniently committed to the unnoticeable currents of winds and waves.

Third, emotions trumped insidious calculations on the cost of the bottom line. The hasty announcement by Malaysia's PM that MH370 crashed into the Indian Ocean without a shred of evidence placed a questionable end to the agony of the waiting families of passengers in Beijing and Kuala Lumpur, supported by the state's airlines. KL's spokesperson had to diplomatically repair the announced stance by affirming the state's commitment to locate any survivors for as long as necessary.

China President Xi Jin Ping's European tour is garnering attention as the head of the second largest world economy, regarded widely in Napoleonic terms as a "sleeping lion" best left undisturbed, rehearsed the Chinese dream as one of peace. (I wrote of China dreaming a year ago; I will reprise the theme in April.)

Madness is often a useful reality check at the personal level. Schizophrenia is often just a trip outside of one's self so that one can return the wiser. The world experienced a communal one this month. We have the option to be wiser.

Emptying the ballot box

Occasionally, I would visit families and friends in the villages to get a feel of the pulse of our community. Some would mask their sentiments but most have given me their straightforward expressions or the entire nine yards.

On either side, you could feel the anger and troubled thoughts in their blank faces and voices. It's a voice I would steer clear of if I were an incumbent politician. The hardship is such that even in festive family gatherings, siblings come close to blows when they talk about pension cuts, health insurance, power bills, and other skyrocketing costs that have robbed families of their buying power. Woe!

I would head home mentally rewinding issues discussed, people in the discussion, and the origin of the hardship spewing out of their mouths.

The divisive casino issue enlisted the most reactions, especially among retirees. Half don't care about the long-term negative effects of Speedy Gonzales casino legislation for as long as they are paid their 25 percent.

Power bills come in tandem with health cost. A near third is the spike in basic food items. The hardship is nailed to its coffin with stagnant wages for over 10 years.

The discussions reach fever pitch emotion; it's useless injecting any rational discussion. How do you talk sense to retirees who got hit heaviest in umpteen ways that emptied what's left in family pocketbooks?

How do you navigate the fate of a retiree who was illegally denied 25 percent of his pension? Add the 40-percent increase in health insurance, \$500 to \$1,000 in deductibles and 40-percent spike in medication.

Put in the power bills and other family obligations, including real estate loans and insurance, etc. He's left with nothing but his check stub. What if he's also helping kids in off-island colleges and universities? It isn't doubly hard but a financial impossibility. Call it misery in forced destitution. What legacy from a half-cocked leadership!

The miseducation of Mr. Fletcher

By FRANCISCO DELA CRUZ
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Editor's Note: The following is the text of a letter the author sent to House Speaker Joseph P. DeLeon Guerrero and Senate President Ralph DLG. Torres on March 25, 2014. He requested for its publication in the Saipan Tribune. Due to its length, it is being published in two parts.

First of a two-part series

Dear Speaker and Senate President: I am writing in response to the letter dated Feb. 7, 2014, addressed to the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate by Mr. Alan W. Fletcher, executive director of CUC, which was received and entered as Dept. & Agency Communication 18-8.

In his letter, Mr. Fletcher refutes the provisions of the House Joint Resolution 18-15 and claims that the resolution's provisions are factually untrue. Mr. Fletcher also asserts that the resolution inappropriately criticizes him and therefore the utility for complying with CNMI law, federal law, and the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission's orders. For the sake of clarity, HJR 18-15 concerned Mr. Fletcher, exclusively. It addressed his inability to steer CUC forward in the right direction by both balancing what is before CUC with regards to the stipulated orders and the high cost of utilities that he manages and oversees. The resolution was not intended to apply to CUC in any fashion whatsoever.

Mr. Fletcher also points out the CUC has always been at the services of the Legislature by attending committee meetings when invited and implies that he should be given credit for appearing before the Legislature. As to this point, Mr. Fletcher should be mindful that as public servants we legislators represent the entire CNMI. On behalf of the people of the CNMI and CUC's customers, the Legislature may exercise its subpoena powers that permit legislators to compel anyone to appear before any committee. Accordingly, Mr. Fletcher is not doing the Legislature or the public viewing our hearings any favors by gracing us with his presence. A public servant has a duty to come when needed. A public servant should come when he is politely requested to do so without asking for undue credit.

It appears Mr. Fletcher confuses our civility and professional courtesy with weakness. Should the Legislature, on behalf of the people of the CNMI, subpoena Mr. Fletcher in the future and have him testify under oath under penalty of contempt so that he can understand and appreciate the difference between our preferred method of making informal requests for his appearances which accommodate his schedule on the one hand, and legal subpoenas that will compel his appearance and testimony under oath, at a time and date of our choosing, on the other?

Progress and future cost

Mr. Fletcher claims that fuel costs account for the lion's share

This is the pulse of our community throughout the entire pearly isles of the NMI. If it's hard on Saipan, it's even harder on Tinian and Rota. This is the time when leadership is needed to ease the hardship in the villages.

Sadly, it's nonexistent! I'd like to hear what suspect leadership has to offer the very people it has neglected for a long, long a time. Empty promises simply means we will empty you out of the ballot boxes this November. *No mas!*

Class of 2014, '15', '16

In three months time, we would see the Class of 2014 march through pomp and circumstance. Each student must have anxiously dreamed of "the day after" tassels are turned, heading off beyond campuses. What would that day be? Will it be a hopeful one or uncertainty?

Will it be college or a job search? Would they ably pay for college tuition and other obligations? If they wish to take a break from academia to help out mom and dad, would they be able to find jobs locally? But I'm sure each would have some fair idea which side of the forked road to take.

For those who move on, what happens to them upon graduation from college? Would returning home be advantageous as they begin plans of their own to live in the community? Would there be suitable jobs for them beyond the government sector? Or would it not be better seeking greener pastures across the country?

Again, the future of young scholars and the expectation that they return and help out in the NMI goes back to crafting meaningful plan from start to completion. We have four years to plan for their return home. The prevailing "sink or swim" attitude doesn't foster hope for them returning home four years from now.

High school 46 years ago

About 46 years ago, Hopwood's Class of 1968 proudly intoned its theme song, *Climb Every Mountain*, and sang it with enthusiasm

of electric bill in the CNMI and converting to another source of base-load generation has the greatest potential for economic savings for consumers. He does not however, state with any clarity what other sources of base-load generators CUC is looking at now. Is it geothermal?

Furthermore, what is this \$300 million, four-year fuel purchase contract that CUC is now embarking on? Has this been RFP'ed? Why four years? This is \$75 million per year just on fuel! Will this lock CUC customers in for the next four years on diesel power generation? Isn't there something else in the offing that can reduce our cost sooner such as LNG or SPMR? Do we really need to wait four years and throw away \$300 million? Is that what you and the administration want, Mr. Fletcher?

Mr. Fletcher states that the end goal is to reduce out dependency on fossil fuel, provide reliable electrical service, and lower cost for consumers. In this how Mr. Fletcher plans to reduce the dependency on fossil fuel—by entering into a four-year fuel purchase?

Geothermal exploration

What then happens if the exploration is not as expected? Do we begin studies for another alternative power generation? How much are we or the federal government throwing now into this bucket of geothermal exploration?

The Guam Power Authority is leaning toward LNG and working on their Integrated Resources Plan. It should not hurt to visit them and ask for more information in these regards. Sen. Tom Ada of Guam is inviting members of the Legislature and even CUC to these discussions. This may be something that can benefit CUC.

Petition to raise rates

While I am very concerned whenever CUC petitions to CPUC for rate increases, I am more concerned about what CUC is doing to cut costs and the plans they have moving forward. I have yet to hear or know of any concrete plans that CUC has.

Mr. Fletcher also stated during the CPUC hearings that the customer base for CUC is, and continues to, decline. This doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out! This will continue to be the case after the CPUC grants and approves all base rates as petitioned by CUC.

Convenience fee

It is my understanding that this was also a fee submitted by CUC. Really? At whose convenience? A better word for this fee is an "Inconvenience Fee." CUC wants to inconvenience its customers more!

Recently it was brought to my attention that the CFO for CUC has his contract renewed with a pay increase! As if Mr. Chuck Warren isn't being paid enough! Is CUC raising the base rates so that it may augment Mr. Chuck Warren's salary increase? And some people wonder why I am so critical of CUC raising rates for its customers.

Transparency

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.

Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.



in pomp and circumstance. Our graduation exercise came immediately following Superstorm Jean. She pummeled the island and left it in total ruins, literally.

The next day, we lined up for breakfast at the Oleai Elementary School field kitchen, emplaced by the military to help islanders regroup. It must be the gift for our graduating class—something to eat—when nothing else works. Imagine rebuilding on our own when everything turns into trash, i.e., breadfruit and bananas slammed in umpteen ways or farm-raised animals killed by the superstorm. It would have been one long scorching summer.

We are ever grateful for all our teachers from grammar to high school. They patiently showed us that there's the torch we must carry forward into the hands of the next generation. I think we've successfully accomplished it and grateful too for our contributions, modest they may be.

1968 was a setback for the entire island. Our folks collected what materials they could scrounge from the old house slammed into scattered piles. It was one time when hammers echo into the wee hours of the morning, non-stop. Slowly, life returned to normalcy.

The Class of '68 took its place in our communities, though more than half is gone. It was a journey worth all the troubles and rewards. Make the best of it as we immerse ourselves in what's known as the Golden Years. We only pass through this valley once. Didn't we *Climb Every Mountain*?

Again, Mr. Fletcher points out that CUC operates in an open and transparent manner. He also states that CUC has functioned as a hybrid agency somewhere between a government agency and an independent public corporation. Mr. Fletcher should be reminded that this is how CUC is supposed to operate since CUC is a semi-autonomous agency of the CNMI government. The issue here is not about how CUC is composed and structured. The issue here is whether the needs of the community are being met by a community utilities corporation in the areas of service and rates. Petitioning for rate increases for the CFO or something worse is troublesome and disturbing.

LED streetlights saving

Mr. Fletcher states that CUC does not understand this allegation. Given that Department of Public Works' Energy Office has given the numbers for LED streetlights:

- Saipan: 2,000
- Tinian: 276
- Rota: 516

Mr. Fletcher is saying that even with 2,792 streetlights replaces with LED type, actual kWh/month being billed *have increased due to better accounting* for the actual number of streetlights.

During the change of these 2,792 streetlights, CUC did an inventory of the streetlights in all three islands. What were the results? Was DPW Energy Division also part of this accounting or inventory so that they knew exactly how many streetlights there are and are being charged to them? It appears that no matter what efficiency practice the CNMI government or paying customers make, CUC will find ways to still charge more! Trying to be efficient will not necessarily constitute savings should be motto for CUC.

Non-efficient vehicles

I have witnessed on several occasions heavy-duty trucks traveling with just the driver along Beach Road and Middle Road with really no justifiable reasons where a standard pickup truck can suffice. They were not hauling heavy materials and supplies. Mr. Fletcher's response is that the fleet change-out occurred before he became executive director, or was it during Mr. Malae's term that the vehicles were procured?

Mr. Fletcher states, I am happy to note that there is supposedly a 21-percent decrease in fuel consumption per gallon per month as compared to the FY 2012 average. However, until we see financial statements on fuel consumption, I cannot verify this statement. Does CUC realize savings when a meter-reader goes around driving a Chevy Silverado V-6 engine truck? I have a picture in hand and anyone is welcome to see it.






To be continued.

Francisco Dela Cruz is a member of the House of Representatives of the 18th Legislature.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
				
Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲ 88° ▼ 76°	▲ 88° ▼ 76°	▲ 87° ▼ 76°	▲ 87° ▼ 76°	▲ 88° ▼ 76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Mostly Sunny	▲ 86 ▼ 77
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲ 86 ▼ 76
Yap	Partly Cloudy	▲ 87 ▼ 77
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	▲ 86 ▼ 79
Pohnpei	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 78
Kosrae	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 78
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲ 86 ▼ 80

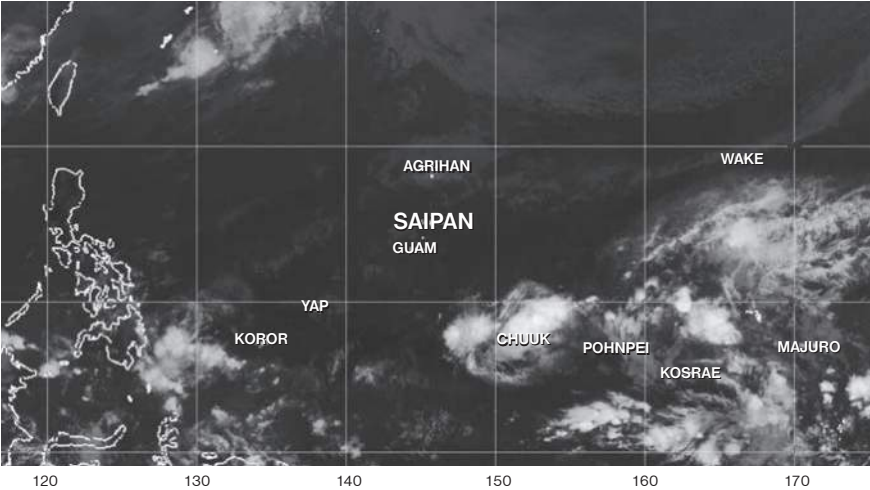
Around The Globe

Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲ 72 ▼ 60
Beijing	Sunny	▲ 74 ▼ 48
Hong Kong	Showers	▲ 72 ▼ 67
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲ 80 ▼ 71
London	Cloudy	▲ 64 ▼ 47
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲ 66 ▼ 51
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲ 93 ▼ 78
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲ 81 ▼ 61
Miami	Sunny	▲ 78 ▼ 66
New York	Showers	▲ 54 ▼ 41
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲ 62 ▼ 47
Paris	Cloudy	▲ 71 ▼ 48
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	▲ 60 ▼ 48
Rome	Partly Cloudy	▲ 66 ▼ 48
Salem	Showers	▲ 55 ▼ 36
San Francisco	Rain	▲ 54 ▼ 47
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲ 67 ▼ 44
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲ 61 ▼ 48
Washington, DC	Sunny	▲ 66 ▼ 43

Tides

Saipan Harbor				
2:57 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet	
8:49 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet	
3:23 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet	
9:28 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet	

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SUNDAY, MARCH 30, 2014

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A weak cold front curves southwestward from northeast of Wake Island through 25N168E to southeast of Minami Tori Shima at 18N156E then continues as a shear line passing near Alamagan at 17N146E to end west of Tinian at 14N140E. Patchy clouds and scattered showers are present along and up to 200 miles northwest of this boundary. A surface trough reaches northward from Enewetak atoll at 11N162E to end near Wake Island at 20N166E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are evident south of Wake within 140 miles of a line from 17N166E to 10N169E. Converging trade winds are producing isolated thunderstorms west of Koror or west of a line from 8N131E to 5N133E. A near-equatorial trough extends northeastward from well southeast of Yap at 140E to a circulation centered near Kosrae at 5N162E then turns southeastward to end near Tarawa atoll at EQ175E. Isolated thunderstorms are seen near the trough axis within 50 miles of a line from 2N145E to 2N152E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found south of the trough axis or south of a line from 2N161E to 4N170E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are present north of the trough near Chuuk within 60 miles of a line from 8N149E to 8N154E to 9N155E. Trade-wind convergence northeast of the eastern end of the near-equatorial trough is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms across much of the Marshall Islands between 5N and 10N from 166E to 173E. A trade-wind disturbance is creating scattered showers near the date line between 7N and 10N from 176E to 180.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:14 AM	6:29 PM
Tuesday	6:13 AM	6:29 PM
Wednesday	6:12 AM	6:29 PM
Thursday	6:11 AM	6:30 PM
Friday	6:11 AM	6:30 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	6:16 AM	6:57 PM
Tuesday	7:03 AM	7:53 PM
Wednesday	7:51 AM	8:49 PM
Thursday	8:39 AM	9:43 PM
Friday	9:28 AM	10:35 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMUT SARI Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

CAMPUS BULLETIN

Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

- For pictures:**
- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
 - Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
 - Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
 - Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
 - For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
 - Fax: (670) 235-3740
 - Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
 - Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
- To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 27, 2014

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA1746	8:55pm	10:52pm	Daily via Rota	UA1746	7:30pm	8:10pm	Daily
SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX)				OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN			
OZ119	4:00am	6:40am	Daily	OZ120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	Daily
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily	DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL297	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily	DL288	8:55pm	1:30am+1	Daily
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	1, 4, 5, 7	OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1	D2101	8:30am	2:00pm	3
D2102	2:20am	5:50am	3	OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	D2103	7:30pm	1:00am+1	6
OZ6063	3:30am	7:20am	4, 7 (will increase eff Jan 29)	OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
D2104	2:00pm	5:30pm	6	OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily	OZ6053	9:10pm	2:30am+1	3, 6 (will increase eff Jan 29)
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7	3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)				BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN			
MU764	4:00am	8:00am	1, 5	MU763	7:20pm	3:00am+1	4, 7
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)				GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6	3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN	OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	PR110/UA5072	7:35am	5:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	Daily via ICN	DL172/288	7:45am	1:30am+1	Daily via NRT
				OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
				OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ606/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN	OZ746/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
UA5068/179	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 5 via GUM	OZ724/605	1:50pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA5038/179	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM	UA180/5071	11:10pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
OZ604/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	Daily via ICN				
SAIPAN-TIANJIN (TSN)				TIANJIN (TSN)-SAIPAN			
D2884	10:45am	2:45pm	Jan 25, 30, Feb 4, 9, 14, 24	D2885	4:45pm	12:20am +1	Jan 25, 30, Feb 4, 9, 14, 24
SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)				HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN			
D2880	4:30pm	8:00pm	Jan 28, Feb 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27	D2881	10:00pm	5:15am +1	Jan 28, Feb 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27
SAIPAN-WUHAN (WUH)				WUHAN (WUH)-SAIPAN			
D2882	11:00am	3:15pm	Jan 27, Feb 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26	D2883	5:15pm	12:20am +1	Jan 27, Feb 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; VLK: Vladivostok Air; SYL: Yakutia Air; D: Dynamic Airways.

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Island Snapshots

Photos by HAIDEE V. EUGENIO



Acting U.S. Interior assistant secretary for insular areas Lori Faeth, right, and Office of Insular Affairs director Nik Pula, left, check out on Friday morning the drawing plan for the development of the Kalabera Cave, a project that is funded by the U.S. Department of the Interior's OIA through the capital improvement project program.



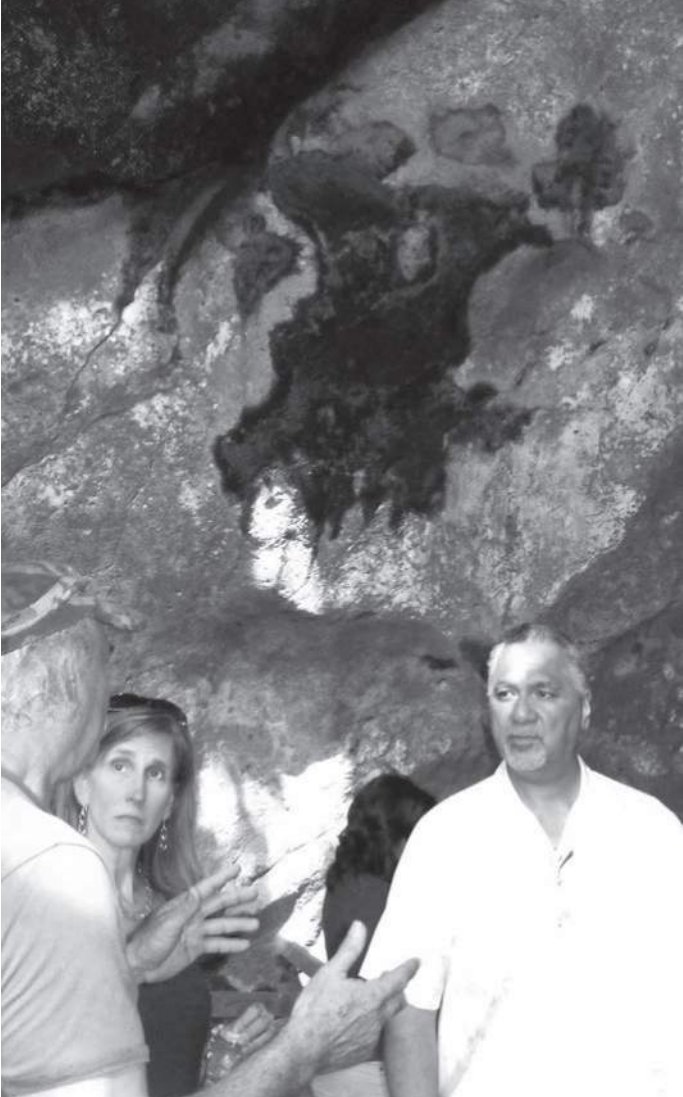
Gov. Eloy S. Inos, acting U.S. Interior assistant secretary for insular areas Lori Faeth, Office of Insular Affairs director Nik Pula and other CNMI officials take part in the ceremonial shoveling of dirt Friday morning to officially begin the Kalabera Cave development project in Marpi.



Kalabera Cave project manager Timothy R. Lang, left, of TRL Architecture, guides acting U.S. Interior assistant secretary for insular areas Lori Faeth, center, and Office of Insular Affairs director Nik Pula, right, in reaching the historic Kalabera Cave in Marpi on Friday morning.



CNMI and federal officials visit the Kalabera Cave on Friday morning.



Local resident John Reyes, left, briefs acting U.S. Interior assistant secretary for insular areas Lori Faeth, center, and Office of Insular Affairs director Nik Pula, right, about Kalabera Cave's history and showed them samples of the petroglyphs or rock carvings/rock drawings in the cave on Friday.



From left, Rep. Christopher Leon Guerrero (Cov-Saipan), Gov. Eloy S. Inos, Office of Insular Affairs director Nik Pula, acting U.S. Interior assistant secretary for insular areas Lori Faeth, and Kalabera Cave development project manager Timothy Lang of TRL Architecture pose for a group photo inside the Kalabera Cave in Marpi on Friday.



From left, Office of Insular Affairs director Nik Pula, special assistant for management and budget Vicky Vilagomez, acting U.S. Interior assistant secretary for insular areas Lori Faeth, Gov. Eloy S. Inos and Public Lands Secretary Pete A. Tenorio pose for a group photo after the governor signed and accepted-on behalf of the Commonwealth people-the U.S. Interior's patent conveying to the CNMI oil, gas and mineral deposit rights within the islands' 3-mile submerged lands, on Friday.

Many employers confirm participation in NMC Career Fair

Many companies have already confirmed their participation in Thursday's, April 3, Career Fair at the Northern Marianas College.

The Career Fair, which is aimed at connecting jobseekers with employers, will feature several private sector companies, non-profit organizations, and government agen-

cies that are looking to fill key vacancies within their organizations. Community members who are seeking jobs are encouraged to attend.

"We are really pleased with the positive responses that we have received from businesses and organizations," said Neda Deleon Guerrero, Career Services manager. "I hope many

job seekers take advantage of the Fair by coming to meet these employers in person."

The participating organizations include the CNMI Department of Labor: Employment Services and WIA (Workforce Investment Agency), Hyatt Regency Saipan, Sorensen Media group, CDI Workforce Development, Commonwealth Of-

fice of Transit Authority, DFS Saipan, Office of Personnel Management, J.C. Tenorio Enterprises, Pacific Islands Club, Commonwealth Utilities Corp., Marianas Health, CNMI Head Start Program, Public School System, Pacifica Insurance, Northern Marianas College Human Resources, College Access Challenge Grant, Office of Vo-

cal Rehabilitation, and the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

The event will be held at 9am and will end at 12pm in NMC's Room D1.

Individuals who plan on attending the career fair but have no transportation are encouraged to call the Commonwealth

Office of Transit Authority and reserve their ride in advance. There will also be accessible passenger vans for individuals with disabilities.

For more information about the free rides or if you would like to make a reservation please call at 664-2690, text at 483-4344, or via email at cnmicallride@gmail.com. (NMC)

JRM celebrates Chamorro, Women's History Month



JESSE LEON GUERRERO

Superior Court of Guam Judge Anita Sukola shares her career and life experiences as a native Chamorro woman of Guam during the Joint Region Marianas' celebration of Chamorro and Women's History Month at the command headquarters in Asan on March 27.



JESSE LEON GUERRERO

Sailors, civilian employees and guests of Joint Region Marianas play a quiz game focused on women and Guam's Chamorro culture during the JRM celebration of Chamorro and Women's History Month at the command headquarters in Asan on March 27.



JESSE LEON GUERRERO

Rear Adm. Tilghman Payne, commander, Joint Region Marianas, joins his staff and guests for lunch at a Guam-style fiesta of various Chamorro dishes, following JRM's Chamorro and Women's History Month celebration at the command headquarters in Asan on March 27.

ASAN, Guam—Joint Region Marianas celebrated Chamorro and Women's History Month at the command headquarters in Asan on March 27.

The JRM Diversity and Inclusion Committee hosted the event to highlight the culture of Guam's native Chamorro people and to honor the positive influence and accomplishments of women in society.

"We celebrate each other's differences because that's what makes us strong," said Rear Adm. Tilghman Payne, commander of JRM. "A diverse group brings different approaches and solutions to the problems and challenges that we all face."

Keynote speaker Superior Court of Guam Judge Anita Sukola shared her experiences as a local woman and praised the structure of Chamorro society and its cultural values, such as caring for the elderly or sick.

"It's not out of obligation that we take care of our parents, but because of respect," she said. "When we respect, it

equates love. That's the product of our Chamorro system. We take care of each other."

Attendees participated in a Jeopardy-style quiz game that focused on women pioneers such as Chief Judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood, who is Guam's first woman to serve as a U.S. District Court judge, and Marie Curie, who is the first woman to win a Nobel Prize.

"It's such an awesome time for women in the Navy," said Cmdr. Tara McArthur-Milton, JRM total force manpower director. "It's very important to note that women have really made a significant contribution in so many different venues, whether it's education, health care, government or the military. It's very exciting to see that and be a part of it."

A fiesta-style luncheon capped the event where attendees enjoyed several Chamorro dishes such as "golai apan aga," or bananas cooked with coconut milk, and the spicy chicken stew known as "kadon pika." (JRM)

Overdue skiff located adrift: one missing, one rescued

SANTA RITA, Guam—An overdue skiff reported missing since March 13 with two people aboard was located off the island of Satawal last Monday, 347 miles west of their departure point at Chuuk Atoll.

Locals from Satawal spotted a vessel with one person aboard drifting approximately one mile from shore and launched a vessel to assist. They quickly determined the vessel was the missing skiff and immediately rendered assistance to the 50-year-old survivor. The survivor was fatigued, but in good health. The second man reportedly jumped overboard a week earlier, a few days after the vessel became disabled and adrift.

The U.S. Coast Guard, along with the U.S. Navy, Federated States of Micronesia, Australia, and several commercial mariners searched more than 12,000 miles and suspended search efforts Saturday.

The search comprised of an HC-130 airplane crew from Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point, Oahu, one Navy P-3 Orion airplane crew from

Okinawa, Japan, one P-3 Orion airplane crew from the Royal Australian Air Force, the Pacific-class patrol boat FSS *Micronesia* from Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, and five good Samaritan commercial ships.

Crewmembers at Coast Guard Sector Guam received a report on March 14 that a 19-foot skiff departed for a daylong fishing trip in the vicinity of the Chuuk Atoll but did not return.

The Coast Guard, Navy, Australia and the FSS *Micronesia* searched west and northwest of Chuuk Atoll. Chuuk Atoll is approximately 621 miles south east of Guam.

The 14th Coast Guard District encompasses an area of 12.2 million square miles of the Central and South Pacific. Coast Guard aircraft based in Hawaii frequently travel thousands of miles in response to search and rescue and other calls for assistance. The Hercules is scheduled to be replaced by the HC-130J, which will bring increased capabilities to Coast Guard response across the Pacific. (USCG)

Over 2K turn up for 28th Red Cross Walkathon

By **JAYSON CAMACHO**
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Over 2,000 joined the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter's annual walkathon on Saturday, March 29, 2014, at the 4-H Building in Susupe near Civic Center.

The 28th American Red Cross Walkathon started as early as 5:30am and had participants walking from Susupe to as far as the Garapan Fishing Base under three separate walkathon marks: 2K, 5K, and 10K.

The event also featured school booths for registration, concession and health provider booths of various organizations, and entertainment.

Booths included that of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, Commonwealth of Transit Authority, Joten-Kiyu Public Library, Commonwealth Cancer Association, Diabetes Coalitions, Mariana Islands Nature Alliance, Family Violence Task Force, Ayuda Network, Commonwealth Utilities Corp., NMC-CREES Aquaculture, Public School System,



JAYSON CAMACHO

More participants finish their walks during Saturday's 28th American Red Cross Walkathon.



JAYSON CAMACHO

Division of Youth Services employees provide information to participants on child abuse and neglect.



JAYSON CAMACHO

Northern Marianas College "College Access Challenge Grant" student shows the "Peace" sign at one of NMC's concession booths.



JAYSON CAMACHO

Children and family members enjoy face-painting by volunteers.



JAYSON CAMACHO

PSS Head Start Program staff were among various schools waiting for participants to register.



JAYSON CAMACHO

American Red Cross volunteers and helpers at their booth wait to provide information on health and safety.



JAYSON CAMACHO

The American Red Cross-NMI Chapter poses for *Saipan Tribune* near the 4-H building during the event.

Head Start Programs, Hardt Eye Clinic, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., MARPAC, Northern Marianas College, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, NMPASI, Coalition on the Anti-Stigmas of Mental Illness in the CNMI, Coke, Subway, and Foremost.

Volunteers and Saipan International School staff coordinated the entertainment and assisted participants.

The event also included game booths, a face-painting booth, an appearance by Happy D' Clown, a bouncing castle, and a petting zoo courtesy of the Saipan Zoo.

John Hirsh, executive director for the ARC-NMI Chapter, said he is thankful for the various volunteers, family members, schools, organizations, students, providers, and everyone at the event.

"The event would have never been as great as it is without the help and support from everyone who participated and helped to make this successful," he said.

Hirsh said it was a great turnout. "We were blessed with the weather, people are out with their families, the Public School System, volunteers, the sponsors, and organizations that have joined today."

Hirsh noted that walkathons were also held on Tinian and Rota.

According to him, board members of the NMI chapter on Tinian and Rota said the event turned out great too, with many community members joining the silver celebration of one of CNMI's biggest walkathon events.

Hirsh said the total amount raised from the event, including the amount raised by individual students and donors, will be tallied this week.

Prizes will be given to those who raised a lot. Four of the top student fundraisers will get to chose prizes such as a Blu-Dash 5.0 smartphone, Kindle Fire HD, and a \$200 gift certificate for Athlete's Foot/All-Star sports equipment.



JAYSON CAMACHO

Food and drinks were provided by Subway. Among others were Coca Cola and Foremost.

Business

2 more recalls push GM total to 4.8M in a month

DETROIT (AP)—General Motors announced two more recalls late Friday, bringing to 4.8 million the number of cars, trucks and SUVs the automaker has called back for repairs in the past month.

The string of recalls, topped by an ignition switch problem in compact cars now linked to 13 crash deaths, has embarrassed the company and sidetracked its new CEO, who started work just over two months ago. GM has admitted knowing about the switch problem a decade ago, yet it didn't recall any cars until February. The recall delay has brought two congressional investigations and probes by the Justice Department and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Late Friday night, GM announced it would recall 490,000 late-model pickup trucks and SUVs because transmission oil cooling lines weren't secured properly in their fittings. Transmission oil can leak from a fitting and hit hot surfaces, causing fires, the company said in a statement. GM said it knows of three fires and no injuries.

The recall affects Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra 1500 pickup trucks from the 2014 model year, as well as 2015 Chevrolet Suburban and Tahoe SUVs and the GMC Yukon and



In this Jan. 25, 2010, file photo, a General Motors Co. logo is shown during a news conference in Detroit.

Yukon XL SUVs. All have six-speed automatic transmissions.

The Silverado is GM's top-selling vehicle and an important profit center for the company. The GMC Sierra also is among GM's top sellers.

Dealers will inspect the transmission oil cooling line fittings and make sure they're securely seated, at no cost to owners.

Also Friday night, GM announced the recall of 172,000 Chevrolet Cruze compact cars because the right front axle shaft can fracture and separate while being driven.

The recall affects cars from the 2013 and 2014 model years equipped with 1.4-liter turbocharged four-cylinder gasoline engines.

If a shaft fractures, the wheels

would lose power without warning and the cars would coast to a stop.

GM says it has warranty reports of several dozen shaft fractures. It is not aware of any crashes or injuries.

Dealers will replace the shafts free of charge.

The recall allows dealers to resume selling affected Cruzes. GM issued a stop sale order on the cars Thursday night.

The recall also covers about 2,500 replacement shafts used to fix manual transmission Cruzes that were recalled last September.

In all, GM has recalled 4.8 million vehicles since last month, two million more than the company sold last year in the U.S. In addition to the recalls announced Friday night, they include:

American farmers confront 'big data' revolution

WICHITA, Kan. (AP)—Farmers from across the nation gathered in Washington this month for what has become an annual trek to seek action on the most important matters in American agriculture, such as immigration reform and water regulations.

But this time, a new, more shadowy issue also emerged: growing unease about how the largest seed companies are gathering vast amount of data from sensors on tractors, combines and other farm equipment.

The increasingly common sensors measure soil conditions, seeding rates, crop yields and many other variables, allowing companies to provide farmers with customized guidance on how to get the most out of their fields.

The involvement of the American Farm Bureau, the nation's largest and most prominent farming organization, illustrates how agriculture is cautiously entering a new era in which raw planting data holds both the promise of higher yields and the peril that the information could be hacked or exploited by corporations or government agencies.

Seed companies want to harness the data to help farmers grow more food with the same amount of land, and the industry's biggest brands have offered assurances that all information will be closely guarded.

But farmers are serving notice in Washington that the federal government might need to become involved in yet another debate over electronic security and privacy. Some members of Congress from rural states such as Kansas were already aware of the concerns, although the issue is new to many urban lawmakers.

Nation

Photos found at slide site; missing number goes down

DARRINGTON, Wash. (AP)—Hundreds of family photographs and albums are among the personal belongings being recovered by crews searching for victims at a massive debris site left by the deadly mudslide in Washington state.

More than a week after the slide destroyed a mountain-side community north of Seattle, crews using heavy machinery and their bare hands continued their work. Late Saturday, authorities said the number of people believed missing decreased substantially, from 90 to 30.

Officials previously said they expected that figure to go down as they worked to find people safe and cross-referenced a "fluid" list that likely included partial reports and duplicates.

As the number of people unaccounted for went down, the fatality list went up.

The official death toll of victims identified by the medical examiner on Saturday increased by one, to 18, said Jason Biermann, program manager at the Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management.

Authorities have said they have recovered more than two dozen bodies - including one on Saturday - but they aren't added to the official tally until a formal identification is made.

And, underscoring the difficulty of identifying those killed in one of the deadliest landslides in U.S. history, Biermann said crews are not always discovering complete remains.

"Rescuers are not always making full recoveries," he said. "Often, they are making partial recoveries."

Personal items, both large and small, are also discovered

in wreckage.

"What we found out here is everything from pictures to gun safes," said Snohomish County Fire District 1 battalion chief Steve Mason.

The items that would later be cleaned, sorted and hopefully returned to families.

All work on the debris field halted briefly Saturday for a moment of silence to honor those lost. Gov. Jay Inslee had asked people across Washington to pause at 10:37 a.m., the time the huge slide struck on March 22.

"People all over stopped work - in honor of that moment," Mason said.

An American flag had been run up a tree and then down to half-staff at the debris site,

Quake forces evacuations in Southern California

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A moderate earthquake that rattled a swath of Southern California forced several dozen people in one community out of their homes after firefighters discovered foundation problems that made the buildings unsafe to enter, authorities said Saturday.

Fire crews red-tagged 20 apartment units in a building in the Orange County city of Fullerton after finding a major foundation crack. Structural woes, including broken chimneys and leaning, were uncovered in half a dozen single-family houses, which were also deemed unsafe to occupy until building inspectors clear the structures. The damage displaced 83 residents.

Despite the evacuations and scattered damage, Friday night's magnitude-5.1 earthquake centered about 25 miles south of downtown Los Angeles mostly frayed nerves.

The quake was preceded by two smaller foreshocks. More than 100 aftershocks followed,

he said.

Dan Rankin, mayor of the nearby logging town of Darrington, said the community had been "changed forevermore."

"It's going to take a long time to heal, and the likelihood is we will probably never be whole," he said.

Among the dozens of missing are Adam Farnes and his mother, Julie.

"He was a giant man with a giant laugh," Kellie Howe said of Farnes. Howe became friends with him when he moved to the area from Alaska. She said Adam Farnes was the kind of guy who would come into your house and help you do the dishes.

including a magnitude-4.1 that hit Saturday afternoon, the largest in the sequence so far that was felt over a wide region. No injuries were reported.

Residents were inconvenienced and some lost valuables, but "thankfully the damage wasn't greater," said Chi-Chung Keung, a spokesman for the city of Fullerton.

Business owners in Orange County spent the aftermath sweeping up shattered glass and restocking shelves. Utility crews worked to restore power and shut off gas leaks and water-main breaks. A rock slide in the Carbon Canyon area of nearby Brea also caused a car to overturn. The occupants had minor injuries, and the road remained closed to traffic.

The Red Cross opened a shelter in neighboring La Habra but closed it once the 38 people who stayed overnight returned home.

Health law legacy eludes Obama as changes sink in

WASHINGTON (AP)—As a roller-coaster sign-up season winds down, President Barack Obama's health care law has indeed managed to change the country.

Americans are unlikely to go back to a time when people with medical problems could be denied coverage.

But Obama's overhaul needs major work of its own if it is to go down in history as a legacy achievement like Medicare or Social Security.

Major elements of the Affordable Care Act face an uncertain future:

■ As a 6-month-long sign-up season comes to an end Monday the administration's next big challenge is to make 2015 open enrollment more manageable for consumers unaccustomed to dealing with insurance jargon. There's also concern premiums will rise next year.

■ The new insurance markets created by the law are anything but customer friendly. After the HealthCare.gov website finally got fixed, more than 6 million people have managed to sign up, allowing the exchanges to stay afloat economically. But many consumers have bought policies with restricted access to top-tier hospitals and the latest medications. The website is seeing heavy traffic this weekend,

and consumers may encounter a wait or last-minute glitches.

■ Nearly half the states are still opposed to or undecided about the law's expansion of Medicaid, the government's health insurance program for the poor. As a result, millions of low-income people who otherwise would have been covered remain uninsured.

■ This year's pitch has been about the "carrots" in the law: subsidies and guaranteed coverage. But the "sticks" are just over the horizon: collecting penalties from individuals who remain uninsured and enforcing requirements that medium- to large-sized employers provide affordable coverage.

Many basic facts about the ultimate effects of the health insurance program remain unclear. It's not known how many of those who have gotten coverage were previously uninsured - the ultimate test of the law. Independent measurements by Gallup do show fewer uninsured Americans, but such progress hasn't won hearts and minds. The public remains deeply divided, with opponents of the law outnumbering supporters.

At a recent insurance industry conference, a top administration official acknowledged the huge job still ahead.

ACROSS THE NATION

Police: Man, 86, kills grandson's girlfriend, self

NEW YORK (AP)—Police say an 86-year-old man shot his grandson in the head and then killed the grandson's girlfriend before fatally shooting himself in New York City. Authorities say Heriberto Pagan, of Brooklyn, shot his 47-year-old grandson outside of a Staten Island house Friday evening before shooting 28-year-old Claritle Christina Huerta in the head inside the house. Huerta died at a hospital. Police say Pagan fled in his car and shot himself in the head several blocks away. He was found outside his car. The grandson

is in stable condition at Staten Island University Hospital. He was not identified.

Utah boy finds American Indian remains in backyard

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—A 14-year-old boy digging a trout pond in the backyard of his father's Salt Lake City home stumbled across a surprise: the remains of an American Indian who lived about 1,000 years ago. Experts from the Utah Department of Heritage and Arts spent Friday removing the remains, which were confirmed by medical examiners as those of a person from a millennium ago, and investigating the site

for archaeological clues after ninth-grader Ali Erturk's discovery earlier in the week. "Humans have occupied this valley for up to 10,000 years," department spokesman Geoffrey Fattah told The Salt Lake Tribune. "We do run into situations where progress runs into the ancient past." A forensic anthropologist will analyze the remains to try to learn more, including the person's sex and cultural affiliation. A report will go to the state Division of Indian Affairs, which will try to determine whether the remains are linked to current tribes, Fattah said. A tribe may claim the remains and perform interment rites.

Asia

Australia hopeful as more items pulled from sea

PERTH, Australia (AP)—Australia's prime minister said Sunday he was hopeful a clue will emerge soon to narrow the hunt for Flight 370, as more objects are pulled from the southern Indian Ocean and checked to see if they are part of the plane that went missing more than three weeks ago.

But so far, even though more ships are scouring the area off western Australia, none of the recovered items has been connected to the Malaysia Airlines plane that crashed March 8 with 239 people on board.

"My understanding from this morning is that there has been no discrete debris associated with the flight," Australian Navy Commodore Peter Leavy told reporters Sunday.

In Sydney, Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott described the "intensifying search effort" as positive because objects "have been recovered from the ocean."

The Australian Maritimes Safety Authority said 10 planes took part in the search Sunday, leaving in staggered times from the western city of Perth. Eight ships were on the scene, including the Australian navy supply ship HMAS Success, which is



AP
An object floats in the southern Indian Ocean in this picture taken from a Royal New Zealand Air Force P-3K2 Orion aircraft searching for missing Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, Saturday, March 29, 2014.

to store any wreckage found.

The ships are trying to locate and identify the objects sighted by aircraft over the past two days.

Leavy, the commander of the search task force, said the operation was made more difficult because the particular area being combed is in a shipping lane littered with potentially more floating objects.

AMSA said there were light showers and low cloud in the area, but not enough to disrupt the search, which is about 2 1/2 hours flying time from Perth, allowing the planes five hours of

searching time before they have to return to base.

Among the objects spotted over the last day were three by a Chinese Ilyushin IL-76 plane that were white, red and orange, according to a report from China's official Xinhua News Agency said. The missing Boeing 777's exterior was red, white, blue and gray.

In Kuala Lumpur, several dozen Chinese relatives of passengers on Flight 370 arrived Sunday to demand to meet top officials for more information about what happened to the airliner.

PH supply ship evades Chinese vessel

SECOND THOMAS SHOAL, South China Sea (AP)—A Philippine government ship slipped past a Chinese coast guard vessel and brought food and fresh troops to a marooned navy ship used as a base by Filipino troops to bolster the country's territorial claims in the disputed South China Sea.

Saturday's incident was witnessed by journalists who were invited by the Philippines military to accompany the resupply mission.

It was a rare close-up look at the tensions in the waters and the determination of all sides to press their claims. China's

growing assertiveness is alarming smaller nations that have competing territorial claims and worrying the United States, which is neutral in the disputes but jockeying for influence with Beijing in the region.

About one hour away from Second Thomas Shoal, where the detachment is based, a Chinese coast guard ship marked "1141" twice crossed the bow of the smaller Philippine vessel in an attempt to stop it from proceeding. Another tailed the Filipino boat.

The Chinese radioed the Filipinos, telling them to stop. "You will take full responsibility for the consequences of your ac-

tion," the voice said in English.

"This is the Republic of the Philippines," replied Philippine navy Lt. Ferdinand Gato, who was in charge of the supply mission. "We are here to provision the troops."

The marines on board the supply boat waved the "V" for peace sign toward the Chinese vessel.

The Filipino captain maneuvered his vessel to shallow waters where the Chinese ships couldn't sail to reach the marooned vessel, BRP *Sierra Madre*, which has become an awkward symbol of Philippine sovereignty in the remote offshore territory.

UN science report: Warming worsens security woes

YOKOHAMA, Japan (AP)—In an authoritative report due out Monday a United Nations climate panel for the first time is connecting hotter global temperatures to hotter global tempers. Top scientists are saying that climate change will complicate and worsen existing global security problems, such as civil wars, strife between nations and refugees.

They're not saying it will cause violence, but will be an added factor making things even more dangerous. Fights over resources, like water and energy, hunger and extreme weather will all go into the mix to destabilize the world a bit more, says the report by the Nobel Peace Prize-winning

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The summary of the report is being finalized this weekend by the panel in Yokohama.

That's a big change from seven years ago, the last time the IPCC addressed how warming affected Earth, said report lead author Chris Field of the Carnegie Institution of Science in California. The summary that political leaders read in early 2007 didn't mention security issues will, he said, because of advances in research.

"There's enough smoke there that we really need to pay attention to this," said Ohio University security and environment professor Geoff Dabelko, one of the lead au-

thors of the report's chapter on security and climate change.

For the past seven years, research in social science has found more links between climate and conflict, study authors say, with the full report referencing hundreds of studies on climate change and conflict.

The U.S. Defense Department earlier this month in its once-every-four-years strategic review, called climate change a "threat multiplier" to go with poverty, political instability and social tensions worldwide. Warming will trigger new problems but also provide countries new opportunities for resources and shipping routes in places such as the melting Arctic, the Pentagon report says.

World

Kerry in Paris to meet with Russia on Ukraine

PARIS (AP)—After a week of travel in the Mideast, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry changed course and arrived in Paris Saturday for talks with his Russian counterpart on the Ukraine crisis.

Halfway home from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Kerry landed in Shannon, Ireland, for a refueling stop, when he decided to turn his plane around and headed to Paris. Kerry is to meet with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov Sunday evening at the Russian ambassador's residence.

Kerry spoke to Lavrov on the flight to Shannon after President Barack Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed in a call on Friday to have their foreign ministers meet to discuss a possible diplomatic resolution to the Ukraine situation.

While in Paris, Kerry may also meet separately with the French foreign minister Laurent Fabius.

State Department spokeswoman Jennifer Psaki on Saturday confirmed the day and

general time of the Kerry-Lavrov meeting.

During Friday's hourlong call Obama urged Putin to withdraw his troops from the border with Ukraine. The Russian leader, who initiated the call, asserted that Ukraine's government is allowing extremists to intimidate civilians with impunity - something Ukraine insists has not happened.

The White House and the Kremlin offered starkly different summaries of the call, which occurred while Obama was traveling in Saudi Arabia. The contrasting interpretations underscored the chasm between how Moscow and Washington perceive the escalating international standoff sparked by Russia's annexation of Crimea away from Ukraine.

White House officials described the call as "frank and direct" and said Obama had urged Putin to offer a written response to a diplomatic resolution to the Ukraine crisis that the U.S. has presented. He urged Moscow to scale back its troop build-up on the bor-

der with Ukraine, which has prompted concerns in Kiev and Washington about a possible Russian invasion in eastern Ukraine.

The Kremlin, on the other hand, said Putin had drawn Obama's attention to a "rampage of extremists" in Ukraine and suggested "possible steps by the international community to help stabilize the situation" in Ukraine.

Kerry had already been due to return to Europe on Tuesday for a NATO foreign ministers meeting and had been considering returning to the Middle East to continue a press to salvage foundering Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. Kerry aides said the option of going to Israel, the Palestinian territories or Jordan remained a possibility.

Psaki said Saturday Kerry would remain in close touch with Martin Indyk, the U.S. ambassador to Israel, and the negotiating team in Jerusalem and Ramallah, West Bank, in the event Kerry needs to return to the region from Paris in advance of NATO.

Armed pro-govt militias roil Venezuela protests

VALENCIA, Venezuela (AP)—The masked gunmen emerged from a group of several dozen motorcycle-mounted government loyalists who were attempting to dismantle a barricade in La Isabelica, a working-class district of Valencia that has been a center of unrest since nationwide protests broke out last month.

The barricades' defenders had been hurling rocks, sticks and other objects at the attackers, who included perhaps a dozen armed men, witnesses told The Associated Press.

Lisandro Barazarte, a photographer with the local newspaper, Notitarde, caught images of several of the men

shooting into the crowd while steadying their firearms on their palms.

"They were practiced shooters," Barazarte said. "More were armed, but didn't fire."

When it was over, two La Isabelica men were dead: a 22-year-old student, Jesus Enrique Acosta, and a little league baseball coach, Guillermo Sanchez. Witnesses told the AP the first was shot in the head, the second in the back. They said neither was at the barricades when he was killed.

Similar shootings across Venezuela by gunmen allied with the socialist-led government have claimed at least seven lives and left more than 30

people wounded since the anti-government protests began in mid-February.

President Nicolas Maduro has done nothing to publicly discourage the violence by armed pro-government militants, loosely known as "colectivos," which are also blamed for scores more cases of beatings and intimidation in multiple cities. That includes a March 19 incursion into the architecture academy at the Central University of Venezuela in the capital in which some 40 masked men and women identifying themselves as government defenders bloodied at least a dozen students.

WORLD BRIEFS

Klitschko backs billionaire for Ukraine presidency

KIEV, Ukraine (AP)—Ex-world boxing champion Vitali Klitschko, considered a strong contender to become Ukraine's next leader, upended the country's presidential race Saturday by announcing he will throw his support instead behind a billionaire candy maker. Klitschko told his UDAR party that he plans to run for mayor of Ukraine's capital city, Kiev, paving the way for current presidential favorite, businessman Petro Poroshenko, in the May 25 vote. The move is likely to ensure that both men cement powerful positions in Ukraine's new government and block the chances of a full return to power from the country's former prime minister, Yulia Tymoshenko.

Report: 2 Spanish journalists freed in Syria

BEIRUT (AP)—Two Spanish journalists were freed after being held captive for six months in Syria by a rogue al-Qaida group, the newspaper for which one of the men worked said Sunday.

With the release of reporter Javier Espinosa and photographer Ricardo Garcia Vilanova, there are at least another nine foreign correspondents missing in Syria, and 10 Syrian reporters. It is believed that many more Syrians who work as media activists are also in captivity.

London skeletons reveal secrets of the Black Death

LONDON (AP)—You can learn a lot from a tooth. Molars taken from skeletons unearthed by work on a new London railway line are revealing secrets of the medieval Black Death—and of its victims. This week, Don Walker, an osteologist with the Museum of London, outlined the biography of one man whose ancient bones were found by construction workers under London's Charterhouse Square: He was breast-fed as a baby, moved to London from another part of England, had bad tooth decay in childhood, grew up to work as a laborer, and died in early adulthood from the bubonic plague that ravaged Europe in the 14th century.

Focus

Govt safety agency missed Cobalt clues

By TOM KRISHER and DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP AUTO WRITERS

DETROIT (AP)—For years, the U.S. government's auto safety watchdog sent form letters to worried owners of the Chevrolet Cobalt and other General Motors small cars, saying it didn't have enough information about problems with unexpected stalling to establish a trend or open an investigation.

The data tell a different story.

An Associated Press review of complaints to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration shows that over a nine-year period, 164 drivers reported that their 2005-2007 Chevrolet Cobalts stalled without warning. That was far more than any of the car's competitors from the same model years, except for the Toyota Corolla, which was recalled after a government investigation in 2010.

Stalling was one sign of the ignition switch failure that led GM last month to recall 1.6 million Cobalts and other compact cars, including the Saturn Ion, Pontiac G5 and Chevrolet HHR. Another 971,000 cars from model years 2008-2011 were recalled late Friday to find faulty replacement switches, bringing the total to about 2.6 million.

GM has linked the problem to at least 13 deaths and dozens of crashes. The company says the switch can slip out of the "run" position, which causes the engine to stall. This knocks out the power steering and power-assisted brakes, making the car harder to maneuver. Power to the device that activates the air bags is also cut off.

GM has recently acknowledged it knew the switch was defective at least a decade ago, and the government started receiving complaints about the 2005 Cobalt just months after it went on sale. House and Senate subcommittees have called the current heads of the automaker and NHTSA to testify on April 1-2 about why it took so long for owners to be told there was a potentially deadly defect in their cars.

Although the overall number of complaints represents only 0.02 percent of the nearly 625,000 Cobalts sold from 2005-2007 in the U.S., experts familiar with NHTSA say they were enough to warrant an investigation and recall. The Cobalt had about the same rate of complaints as the Corolla. And the agency knew of at least two fatalities in Cobalt crashes that involved a sudden stall when it first declined to investigate the cars in 2007.

Spotting trends in the tens of thousands of complaints NHTSA gets each year is a tough job, and this case may have been more complicated than most. The Cobalt had a litany of problems, including fuel leaks, and a power steering defect that the agency did investigate. GM may not have disclosed all the information it had on the switches. And the 2010 recall of millions of Toyotas for unintended acceleration claimed much of the government's attention.

But several experts say NHTSA should have pressed for a recall sooner.

"They're not connecting up the dots. That's the generous explanation," says Clarence Ditlow, executive director of



This undated image taken from video shows the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) crash test of a 2005 General Motors Cobalt.

the Washington-based Center for Auto Safety, who has studied the government's auto safety agency for decades. "The not-so-generous is that they did connect the dots but they just didn't do anything."

U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, whose department oversees auto safety, has asked for an internal investigation into the GM issue. In a letter calling for the probe, Foxx said he is unaware of information that NHTSA "failed to properly carry out its safety mission based on the data available to it and the processes followed."

The safety agency, in a statement provided to the AP, said that during the past seven years, its investigations have brought 929 recalls of more than 55 million vehicles. "Each potential recall investigation is unique and dependent on the data gathered in each case," it said.

Foxx has said that GM didn't give the government enough information on the defective switches. In papers submitted to the safety agency last month, GM says engineers proposed solutions to the problem in early 2005, but the company didn't take action, developments unknown to the safety agency at the time. But the AP analysis makes clear that even without that information, NHTSA had evidence in 2005 that the switches were a problem.

That summer, the agency hired a contractor to look into a July 29, 2005, crash in Maryland that killed 16-year-old Amber Marie Rose. The report concluded that the air bags of Rose's 2005 Cobalt did not inflate, and the ignition switch had moved from the run position to "accessory," which runs devices like the radio but not the engine. Alcohol and speed also were factors, the report said.

Rose's birth mother, Laura Christian, said that after the crash, she studied the government's complaint database and found multiple problems with engine stalling and power steering failures on other Cobalts.

She tried to tell NHTSA, but the agency wasn't interested, she said.

"Basically, it was 'No, thank you,'" Christian said. "NHTSA should have known, based on the information I have seen, certainly in 2006."

On Thursday, David Friedman, the agency's acting administrator, told Christian that he was taking steps to improve NHTSA's information-gathering processes, Christian says. They met at the agency's offices.

Among the other evidence available to the agency:

■ In December 2005, General Motors sent the safety agency and its dealers a service bulletin telling them that

AP impact

drivers could inadvertently turn off the ignition switch with minimal effort in Cobalts from the 2005 and 2006 model years. Dealers were told about repairs and to tell drivers reporting engine shutdowns to remove unnecessary items from their key chains.

■ In October 2006, GM sent the agency and dealers another service bulletin, adding Cobalts from the 2007 model year.

■ In 2007, the government commissioned a report on a 2006 Wisconsin crash that killed two teenage girls and injured another. In that report, Indiana University's Transportation Research Center found that the ignition in the 2005 Cobalt was in the "accessory" position and the air bags failed to inflate. Investigators told the agency that "inadvertent contact with the ignition switch or a key chain in the 2005 Chevrolet Cobalt can in fact result in engine shut-down and loss of power."

■ In 2007 and later in 2010, NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigations examined data on stalling incidents and air bag failures in GM cars. Yet the agency recently told House members it was unable to spot trends that were sig-

nificant when compared with "peer vehicles" or the U.S. passenger car fleet, according to a letter released earlier this month by the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

But Ditlow says comparisons with peers are less important than simply watching the numbers and taking action when they get too high.

"I don't believe in innocence by association, that if you can find someone as bad as me, then I get off," he said. "If you're 50 percent worse, 25 percent worse, what's the dividing line?"

The complaint tally for the top-selling small cars in the 2005-2007 model years was: Corolla, 228; Cobalt, 164; Honda Civic, 60; Ford Focus, 25; and the Mazda 3, 19.

The government opened an investigation into the Corolla in late 2009, which led to the 2010 recall of nearly 1.3 million cars to replace faulty engine control modules that could make the cars stall without warning.

The agency investigated the Toyota complaints even though there were no reports of deaths or injuries related to the stalls. By contrast, it had already learned about deadly crashes in the Cobalt.

The Wisconsin crash, which happened on a rural road at 7:55 p.m. Oct. 26, 2006, killed Natasha Weigel, 18, and Amy Rademaker, 15. The driver, Megan Phillips, then 17, was severely injured.

Margie Beskau, Rademaker's mother, blames NHTSA for not recalling the cars beforehand.

"You have all these reports on this car. They should have done their job," she said.

Phillips remembers little of the crash and still suffers from brain damage. She does recall that everything in the car shut down, according to her attorney, Robert Hilliard of Texas, who represents 12 people killed in GM cars when the air bags failed to inflate.

Hilliard says NHTSA doesn't have the cash, the staff or the legal resources to match the automakers.

"It's a poor watchdog of a very powerful industry," he said.

NHTSA says it screens around 40,000 complaints per year. There is no set number for starting an investigation, but it considers complaints, injuries and deaths, warranty data submitted by automakers and other factors.

Sometimes NHTSA acts quickly. For example, the agency investigated electric car maker Tesla Motors after just two reports of vehicle fires and no injuries. It ended the four-month investigation when Tesla decided to fortify the bottom of its cars. It also began investigating older model Porsche 911 sports cars for coolant leaks last year based on 10 complaints and no injuries. That probe was closed without finding a safety defect.

When the Cobalt ignition problems surfaced in 2005, the agency was still building its consumer complaint database, so the Cobalt stalling data could have been overlooked, says a person familiar with the agency, who asked not to be identified because of the Congressional investigation.

In 2000, Congress passed legislation that required automakers to give NHTSA more data, including data about injuries, deaths and consumer complaints. The agency was building the new system to sort through it all.

The person familiar with the agency also says the Cobalt's other defects could have been a distraction. For instance, the government prodded GM to recall more than 1 million Cobalts and other small cars in 2010 to replace power steering motors.

Sorting out the mechanical causes of a problem like stalling is difficult, particularly when it's not happening in every vehicle.

"When you have things that are this infrequent, it's difficult to find out what the cause is," said David Cole, the former chairman of the Ann Arbor, Mich.-based Center for Automotive Research and the son of a former GM president. "Something that happens in 10 percent of vehicles, you catch that right away. But one in 100,000 is really tough."

That's no comfort to victims or current Cobalt owners like Penny Brooks.

Brooks feels betrayed by GM and by the government. She bought a used 2005 Cobalt, with 40,000 miles on it, five years ago. Last year, her husband was driving about 60 mph when the engine suddenly stalled. They made it safely to the side of the road and took the car to a mechanic, who could find nothing wrong.

Since then, the car has stalled two more times when Brooks hit bumps in the road that caused the ignition to slip out of the run position. "Nobody should have to sit there and pray, 'Keep me safe until I get back home,'" said Brooks, a licensed cosmetologist from Kingsport, Tenn.

She filed a complaint on NHTSA's website last year and says she even wrote a letter to GM's then-CEO, Dan Akerson, but got no responses. After the recall was announced, Brooks took the car to a local dealer, who gave her a loaner to drive until the Cobalt is repaired.

Health & Fitness

US autism estimate rises to 1 in 68 children

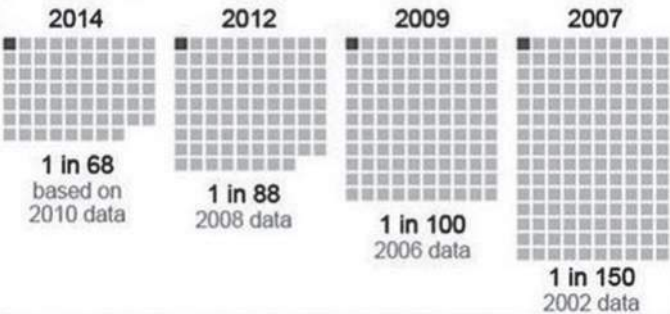
By MIKE STOBBE
AP MEDICAL WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—The government’s estimate of autism has moved up again to 1 in 68 U.S. children, a 30 percent increase in two years.

But health officials say the new number may not mean autism is more common. Much of the increase is believed to be from a cultural and medical shift, with doctors diagnosing autism more frequently, especially in children with milder

problems. “We can’t dismiss the numbers. But we can’t interpret it to mean more people are getting the disorder,” said Marisela Huerta, a psychologist at the New York-Presbyterian Center for Autism and the

Autism prevalence growing in U.S.
One in 68 U.S. children is believed to have autism or a related disorder, according to the latest estimate – a 30 percent jump from the 2012 federal estimate



SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
AP
Graphic compares prevalence in children with autism or related disorders since 2007.

school records to see which children met the criteria for autism, even if they hadn’t been formally diagnosed. Then, the researchers calculated how common autism was in each place and overall.

The CDC started using this method in 2007 when it came up with an estimate of 1 in 150 children. Two years later, it went to 1 in 110. In 2012, it went to 1 in 88.

Last year, the CDC released results of a less reliable calculation - from a survey of parents - which suggested as many as 1 in 50 children have autism.

Experts aren’t surprised by the growing numbers, and some say all it reflects is that doctors, teachers and parents are increasingly likely to say a child with learning and behavior problems is autistic. Some CDC experts say screening and diagnosis are clearly major drivers, but that they can’t rule out some actual increase as well.

“We cannot say what portion is from better diagnosis and improved understanding versus if there’s a real change,” said Coleen Boyle, the CDC official overseeing research into children’s developmental disabilities.

Study: MMA brain injury risk higher than boxing



In this April 20, 2013, file photo, Josh Thomson, top, punches Nate Diaz during the second round of a UFC lightweight mixed martial arts fight in San Jose, Calif.

By MICHAEL VIRTANEN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—About one-third of professional mixed martial arts matches end in knockout or technical knockout, indicating a higher incidence of brain trauma than boxing or other martial arts, according to a new study in the American Journal of Sports Medicine.

University of Toronto researchers examined records and videos from 844 Ultimate Fighting Championship bouts from 2006 to 2012 for the study published this month. They found that 108 matches or nearly 13 percent ended in knockouts. Another 179 matches, or 21 percent, ended in technical knockouts, usually after a combatant was hit in the head five to 10 times in the last 10 seconds before the fight was stopped.

“We’re taking the premise with this that what you see on TV is one thing, but to kind of add scientific rigor to document it objectively,” said Michael Hutchison, co-author and director of the concussion program at the university’s MacIntosh Sports Medicine Clinic. With the technical knockouts, or TKOs, they reviewed videos and found “an increasing number of repetitive strikes to the head” during the last 30 seconds of a match, he said.

Professional mixed martial arts includes elements of wrestling, judo, boxing and kickboxing inside an enclosure with

fighters wearing small, fingerless gloves and no headgear.

Officials from UFC, the sport’s major brand, seeking approval to stage bouts in New York have argued that mixed martial arts has evolved over 20 years with many safety regulations to protect fighters, including mandatory suspensions after concussions. They say it’s safer than boxing, where fighters tend to take repeated blows from padded gloves, with no history of deaths or traumatic brain injuries sustained in the ring.

Lawrence Epstein, chief operating officer of UFC, called the Toronto study “somewhat flawed” and said a forthcoming study by researchers who have enrolled nearly 400 active and retired fighters will provide better insight.

“By partnering with the Cleveland Clinic, one of the world’s leading medical research institutions, on advanced studies aimed at not only preventing long-term brain injuries, but also identifying those predisposed to them, the UFC demonstrates true commitment to the safety of all professional athletes,” Epstein said.

Preliminary results from the Cleveland studies found athletes with higher exposure to head trauma—based on a formula including number of fights, years fighting and fights per year—were likelier to score lower on cognitive testing. Researchers conducting the free, ongoing assessments of fight-

ers’ brain health are examining factors like genetics, lifestyle or head trauma exposure and susceptibility to injury.

The Toronto researchers, who examined UFC matches, found the time from a knockout blow—often a punch to the jaw—until matches were stopped averaged 3.5 seconds with losers on average getting hit 2.6 more times to the head. With TKOs, they found that in the last 30 seconds before a match was stopped the loser was hit on average 18.5 times, 92 percent of those to the head.

Hutchison acknowledged that unlike the knockouts, which meet the criteria for brain concussions, they can’t definitively identify the particular injury from a TKO. Professional rules say that happens when a referee stops a fight because one competitor can no longer defend himself. “We can accurately suggest ... this can’t be good for their health,” he said.

Citing data from other research, the study said the mixed martial arts head trauma rate also outpaces football and hockey.

The researchers proposed introducing rules like in boxing where a fighter gets a 10-second count and evaluated after a knockdown. They also proposed more training to help referees to identify fighters who are defenseless or have lost consciousness so they can stop fights more quickly.

Personal Trainer

Obstacles for the overweight

Moderate exercise, combined with a sensible, low-calorie diet, is excellent for weight loss; how to get over the hurdles and get going:

Difficulty	Possible solution
Low motivation or confidence	Exercise with a partner or group; keep an exercise diary; celebrate your progress and physical improvement
No time to exercise	Write down weekly exercise goals; get support from friends or family
No facilities or equipment	Do daily activities in way that boosts calories used; try walking
Previous bad experience	Walk or do other low-intensity exercise; try to overcome your negative thinking; get support from friends, family
Difficulties from weight	Choose activity suited to larger bodies, like biking; remember that activity will become easier with practice
Poor balance	Try swimming, other non-weight-bearing activities
Anxiety, worry	Go slowly; keep your exercise fun; do it with a friend

Source: The Physician and Sportsmedicine
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Paul Trap
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Life & Style

One Direction cleans up at Kids' Choice Awards

By CHRIS TALBOTT
AP MUSIC WRITER

Robert Downey Jr. turned inspirational speaker at the Kids' Choice Awards, Pharrell set another fashion trend, David Blaine lost his head during a slime-induced illusion, One Direction and Jennifer Lawrence cleaned up, and the green goo bath finally caught up with Mark Wahlberg—thanks to some unlikely slimers.

Nickelodeon's 27th annual awards show was among its more entertaining, opening with a sprawling and colorful Todrick Hall-choreographed performance and closing with Wahlberg's eventual sliming on Saturday night in Los Angeles. Along the way One Direction



Mark Wahlberg gets slimed at the 27th annual Kids' Choice Awards at the Galen Center on Saturday, March 29, 2014, in Los Angeles.

Piers Morgan ends CNN show with gun-control plea

By LYNN ELBER
AP TELEVISION WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—CNN host Piers Morgan issued one last plea for U.S. gun control as he wrapped up his show's three-year run.

Morgan devoted the prime-time show's final minutes Friday night to the issue that he said has been a "consistent and often very controversial" part of "Piers Morgan Live."

The British-born host cited gun violence statistics and expressed dismay that mass shootings including those in Newtown, Conn., and Aurora, Colo., haven't led to stricter laws.

Morgan blamed politicians that he said had been bullied into "cowardly" silence by a

gun lobby led by the National Rifle Association.

A message seeking comment from the NRA was left Friday night with an answering service at its headquarters.

Piers concluded with remarks addressed to his critics.

"To those who claim my gun control campaign has been anti-American, well, the reverse is true. I'm so pro-American I want more of you to stay alive," he said, adding, "Now it's down to you."

Morgan is a former U.K.



Morgan

tabloid editor who reinvented himself as a TV personality with stints as a judge on "Britain's Got Talent" and its U.S. spinoff, NBC's "America's Got Talent," and as a contestant on "Celebrity Apprentice."

In 2011, he succeeded longtime CNN host Larry King in the 9 p.m. Eastern time slot, but drew increasingly paltry ratings. He has said that CNN's audience tired of hearing a Brit weigh in American cultural issues.

Last fall, the already struggling "Piers Morgan Live" faced increased competition from a revised Fox News Channel lineup that included a strong new performer opposite Morgan with Megyn Kelly's "The Kelly File."

When the show's end was

announced last month, Morgan said he was in discussions with CNN regarding a new role. The channel said then that his future was undetermined.

Morgan served as editor of The Daily Mirror from 1995 to 2004. He has been questioned in connection with Britain's long-running phone hacking scandal, which has led to numerous arrests, resignations and the closure of Rupert Murdoch's News of the World tabloid.

In February, Morgan confirmed that he was interviewed in December by British police investigating the illegal interception of telephone voice-mails. Morgan, who said he had given a previous witness statement, has consistently denied wrongdoing.

Rosario Dawson wants a Dolores Huerta movie

By SIGAL RATNER-ARIAS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK (AP)—Playing renowned civil rights activist Dolores Huerta in the new biopic "Cesar Chavez" doesn't seem to be enough for Rosario Dawson. The actress, who knows and has worked with Huerta, would now like to bring her friend's life to the screen.

"I hope with the success of this film that there's an opportunity to tell her story, 'cause she's still writing it, she's still out there on the front lines doing the stuff," Dawson said in a recent interview.

After appearing in "Chavez," which opens Friday, Dawson said she was "very much encouraged" to produce a story about Huerta. "I did so much research about her and it was just impossible - a lot of the stuff that we filmed didn't even make it into the cut," she said.

Starring Michael Pena in the

title role and America Ferrera as his wife, Helen, "Cesar Chavez" follows the Chicano activist as he builds the United Farm Workers union and eventually forces growers to sign contracts to better the working conditions of mostly Latino field laborers.

"What's really remarkable about this movie is that it really shows how women, specially his wife, were such a big part of (Chavez's) life and how broad the community was of people that made this movement possible," Dawson said. "He was a very sort of reluctant hero, he wasn't the best orator, speaker, speechwriter or any of these different things, but his message was really clear - he was speaking for himself, for his family and for the greater community."

Huerta is just the opposite, Dawson said: "She is very forthright, she is very in your face, she would have no problem jumping into this meet-



Dawson

ing (saying) 'I've never had any experience writing a contract before but I'm going in.'"

"I think they really balance each other out and I think having women be such a huge part of the movement is what helped it to stay non-violent and I just really credit (director Diego Luna) for making a film that really shows how many people were part of it and specially those women."

Dawson first met Huerta a few years ago when they collaborated about the organization Voto Latino, which was co-founded by the actress to promote the Latino vote in the United States. Since then, they've kept in touch. Dawson has also worked with the Dolo-

res Huerta Foundation.

When Luna met Dawson to offer her the role, the actress wanted to know exactly what his intentions were. "I knew her and I loved her, so I was (like), 'Why are you doing this film?'" she said, laughing. Then Huerta gave the casting her blessing and the deal was done.

Dawson said the hardest part about playing Huerta was portraying someone who is still alive but also who she knows and admires deeply.

"I have a tendency to gravitate toward stories like that ... (portraying) particularly strong women. I like playing women who make their presence known in their community," said the star of films like "Sin City," "Death Proof" and "Grindhouse." "But it's also been really fun over the years playing, you know, sick, soft, nervous and anxious. I find being vulnerable much more difficult to do for myself as a role."

won two awards, producer Dan Schneider won the show's first lifetime achievement award and Robert Downey Jr. got real after winning best male butt-kicker.

"This is the highest honor yet bestowed on me—I'm grateful, humble, the whole deal," the "Iron Man" star said. "You know I wasn't always a butt-kicker. In fact, life has kicked my proverbial butt countless times in many ways for many years, until I decided one day to start kicking back. Now look at me!"

He slipped in a plug for new movie "Avengers 2" before advising, "Remember when life is kicking your butt, never forget to kick it back right in the face."

More than a dozen former and current teen stars joined on stage to salute Schneider, the creator of several of the network's most popular shows, including "iCarly," "Kenan & Kel" and "Sam & Cat," a current Nickelodeon hit that won favorite TV show and favorite TV actress for star Ariana Grande.

"You've made more milk come out of kids' noses than anyone else," "Kenan & Kel"

and "Saturday Night Live" star Kenan Thompson said in a video message.

One Direction won favorite music group and favorite song for "Story of My Life," Lawrence won favorite movie actress and favorite female butt-kicker, Selena Gomez was named favorite female singer, Adam Sandler was named favorite male actor at the fan-voted awards and Kevin Hart took favorite funny star.

The awards show isn't much more than an excuse to slime some of today's top stars, and first-time host Wahlberg executed several slimings as he successfully escaped the green goo for the show's first 80 minutes. His first victims were actress Kaley Cuoco and Pharrell, who chose fortuitously to wear a pair of bright yellow SpongeBob SquarePants pajamas instead of his now-trademark poofy fedora.

It was Hart who eventually tricked Wahlberg into the goo, with an assist from the actor's three young children.

"I can't believe my own kids turned on me," Wahlberg shouted.

Comic says onstage leg injury felt like bear trap

By KEN RITTER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Veteran comedian George Wallace told a Nevada jury on Friday that it felt like a bear trap clamped his leg when he injured his Achilles tendon during a stand-up comedy show for a private audience at a resort on the Las Vegas Strip.

The 61-year-old comic never cracked a smile as he recalled his vivid inner monologue after becoming entangled in wiring as he crossed the stage during the show for a corporate group at the Bellagio in December 2007.

"All of a sudden, I thought I was electrocuted," he said. "Man, I don't know what a bear trap feels like. But something went through me from the bottom of my feet to the top of my head."

Wallace, who has been doing standup comedy for almost 40 years, said he kept telling jokes and exchanging laughs with members of the HSBC Card Services Inc. audience, but leaned on a podium as he delivered gifts as planned to several people. He said he was paid \$30,000 for the show.

While Wallace testified, jurors saw photos of a black speaker console with black wiring coiled around the base, and an image from the audience of

Wallace in the spotlight next to a tablet lectern.

All the while, Wallace said, "I was thinking, 'I can't walk.'"

Wallace's attorney, Dominic Gentile, has said he plans to ask the jury to award Wallace \$9 million for his injury and negligence claim.

Bellagio attorneys led by Paul Haire say Wallace voluntarily assumed the risk of injury during his show, had a pre-existing injury and was careless onstage.

The defense's presentation is scheduled next week.

Wallace testified Thursday that his personal and professional life have been permanently affected by his leg injury, and that he's not able to dance or run on stage like he used to do.

Wallace followed the ill-fated show at the Bellagio with his regular 10 p.m. performance at the Flamingo, where he recently marked his 10th anniversary.

The jury saw a video of him in that show, seated onstage in a swivel chair, playing the scene for laughs as he asked his warm-up performers, MO5AIC, what the audience must be thinking.

"They're, 'Oh, George Wallace is in a wheelchair,' " he said. "And they will think I'm doing a joke."

Some in the audience laughed.

"See, it's funny to them already," Wallace said. "But it ain't funny to me. I'm hurtin'."

Lady Gaga performs at Roseland Ballroom

NEW YORK (AP)—Lady Gaga celebrated her 28th birthday with an energetic but short concert at the Roseland Ballroom in her first of seven concerts at the closing venue.

Gaga performed for an hour Friday night in front of a feverish crowd. She started with a slow version of "Born This Way" on piano, with the audience joining in. She followed that with the jams "Monster" and "Bad Romance." She danced and sang on the side of the stage in a red tight leotard.

"Thank you so much for spending my birthday with me," she yelled to the audience, which included her actor-boyfriend Taylor Kinney and Nate Ruess, lead singer for the band Fun.

Gaga was in top form as she sang nearly a dozen of her songs, including "Just Dance," an acoustic version of "Poker Face," and the recent hit "Applause." The concert's main surprise: It was too short. After she ended, fans waited for the pop star to hit the stage again. She never did.

She performed some tracks from her recent album, "ARTPOP," which has struggled to match the success of her other releases. But on-stage, she showed no signs of slowing down.

Gaga closed with the new single, "G.U.Y.," now wearing an all-white ensemble (her sixth costume change for the night).

"Thanks for making this the best birthday ever," she said.

The New York-born singer will perform six more shows at



Recording artist Lady Gaga arrives at the Roseland Ballroom for the first night of her series of concerts at the venue on Friday, March 28, 2014, in New York. AP

the Roseland Ballroom, helping close the famed venue that opened eight decades ago. Performers in the past have included The Rolling Stones, Madonna and Beyonce, who famously performed four shows in 2011 when she was pregnant.

"How many New Yorkers are in here tonight?" Gaga asked early in the show. "Do you believe in love? Do you?"

The Grammy winner kept the concert tame compared to her showcase at the South by Southwest festival this month, which featured a performance artist vomiting paint on her. She thanked her fans a number of times in between songs.

Newly developed Cobain photos show suicide scene

SEATTLE (AP)—Police say recently developed photos show the greenhouse room above a garage where grunge rock icon Kurt Cobain killed himself 20 years ago.

The four rolls of crime scene photos were developed by a cold case detective in anticipation of the anniversary of the Nirvana frontman's suicide on April 8, 1994.

Police made two of the photos public March 20 when they announced the development.

Those images show a box of drug paraphernalia and items such as glasses, a wallet and pack of cigarettes.

All 35 photos were released this week to CBS through a public disclosure request. The Associated Press also is seeking the images.

Police spokeswoman Renee Witt says nothing from the additional photos has changed the conclusion that Cobain killed himself with a shotgun. The case remains closed.

Chiklis joins 'Coven' principals for next 'Horror'

By **MIKE CIDONI LENNOX**
AP ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Michael Chiklis is ready to freak out.

The actor is joining the "American Horror Story" family for the anthology series' fourth season, subtitled "Freak Show." The Emmy-winning star of "The Shield" will portray the ex-husband and father of characters played, respectively, by Kathy Bates and Evan Peters.

The Chiklis casting announcement came during the "American Horror Story: Coven" event that served as closing night of PaleyFest, which over 16 days presented casts and crews of past and present TV series, attracting thousands of fans to the Dolby Theatre.

"Coven," which aired from October 2013 to January 2014 on the FX channel and revolved around witches in a New Orleans boarding school, made for the highest-rated of the three "Horror Story" seasons.

The series' stars present for the PaleyFest panel were surprise attendee Bates, as well as previously announced Peters, Angela Bassett, Jamie Brewer, Frances Conroy, Denis O'Hare

Sarah Paulson, Emma Roberts and Gabourey Sidibe.

Actress "Jessica (Lange) is on spring break with her grandchildren," noted series co-creator Ryan Murphy, who later revealed more season-four casting news:

Lange and "every person on this stage is coming back in some capacity," he said.

Murphy explained the setting for the upcoming series "is not a circus and is not carnival, it's a freak show," adding that it was Lange who came up with idea of her character.

Lange will play a German expat in 1950s Jupiter, Fla., who is a "collector of freaks," said Bassett, who continued, "(She) will do anything - and I don't know what 'anything' might be - to keep this dying cottage industry alive just a little bit longer."

All actors queried said they knew little about "Freak Show," except the premise. But, Paulson, for one, clearly can't wait to get back to work in New Orleans, which, this time, will double for Jupiter.

"All I want is a peg leg and a black tooth ... and a hunchback," Paulson said, laughing.

"American Horror Story: Freak Show" is set to debut this fall.

Husband's depression won't be cured by acting out online

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: I have been married for seven years and have two children. My husband has what I can only describe as an Internet addiction. He's literally online from the time I go to bed until I wake up to take our kids to school. I checked and discovered many profiles he has made up on different dating sites.

When I confronted him, he told me he has no interest in having an affair. He said he has been depressed for some time, and it's his way of escaping reality. I recommended he talk to a therapist, but he keeps trying to justify his behavior by telling me I have no reason to feel hurt because it's all "make-believe."

Our relationship has taken a serious dive since I found out. I no longer trust him alone on the computer. I am also no longer attracted to him, and I no longer feel attractive. I don't know what I can do to be a supportive partner if he won't admit he has a problem. Please help me. I'm at a total loss.

SECOND TO A SCREEN NAME

DEAR SECOND: May I be frank? First on your agenda should be to take care of yourself and your own emerging depression. If that means talking to a professional, then go for it.

You have every right to be angry about what your husband has been doing. It isn't harmless, and it isn't effective therapy for his depression. Much as you might wish to, you can't fix his problem—which is trying to escape from reality. Only he can do that. Let's hope he'll find the courage to face what he's trying to escape from while your marriage is still salvageable.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I am not suicidal, but I do think about death, in the sense of what happens when one dies. I believe in the heaven-and-hell theory. Although I'm not sure I want to go to heaven, I AM sure I don't want to go to hell.

My reason for not wanting to go to heaven is because of the relatives who have gone before me. I come from a very abusive family but, like so many, most of them have been able to do what I call the "last-minute redemption." With that in mind, I do not want to spend all of eternity with the same people I could not wait to have exit this Earth.

I am also not a big believer in this forgiveness thing—forgiving adults who do these things to children and expect them to forget about it. I sure haven't, and I never will!

Do you, or the clergy, think it's possible for God to just let some of us sleep through eternity without meeting up with family on "the other side"?

OWENSBORO, KY., READER

DEAR READER: Because I am more involved with what's going on in this life rather than the next, I took your question to Rev. Canon Mark Stanger of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. He suggests that you stop thinking about heaven as a "place" or that you need a scorecard to get there. He also said: "A merciful God will make heaven what you need—and in your case, heaven may be liberation from these troubled people."

■■■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■■■

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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Officials: Reality TV star Benzino shot by nephew

BROCKTON, Mass. (AP)—Reality TV star Benzino was injured after being shot by his nephew on a Massachusetts highway Saturday while riding in a funeral procession for a family member, according to authorities and Benzino's hip-hop magazine.

Benzino, whose real name is Raymond Scott, is a cast member of the VH1 reality show "Love & Hip Hop: Atlanta" and CEO of Hip-Hop Weekly. The magazine confirmed on its website Saturday night that Benzino had been shot.

The 48-year-old Benzino was traveling on Route 3 south of Boston just before noon when 36-year-old Gai Scott pulled alongside and fired several shots into a red SUV driven by Benzino, the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office said in a statement. Officials say there had been growing tension between the two.

Benzino, of Mansfield, Mass., got out of the SUV after being struck and was taken by

a passerby to the Duxbury Police Department and then transferred to a hospital.

Hip-Hop Weekly said he was shot in an arm, and his back was grazed by a bullet.

He was listed in good condition, a spokeswoman for South Shore Hospital in South Weymouth said Sunday morning.

The magazine said Benzino was in the area to bury his mother. He was heading to a church in Plymouth at the time of the shooting, the District Attorney's Office said.

Police responding to the scene found the red SUV in the middle of Route 3 with bullet holes and a reddish brown substance believe to be blood inside the vehicle. Officials said shell casings and projectiles also were found at the scene.

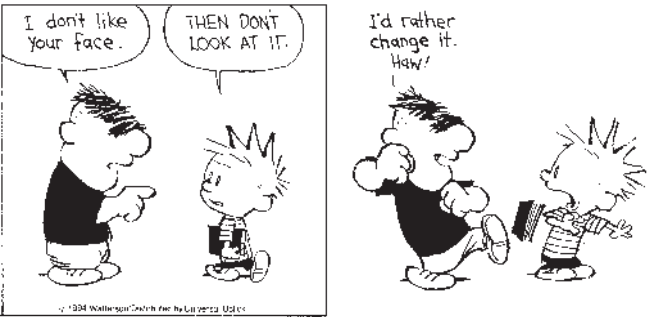
Gai Scott, of Randolph, Mass., was taken into custody and charged with assault with intent to murder. He is scheduled to be arraigned Monday in the Plymouth District Court.



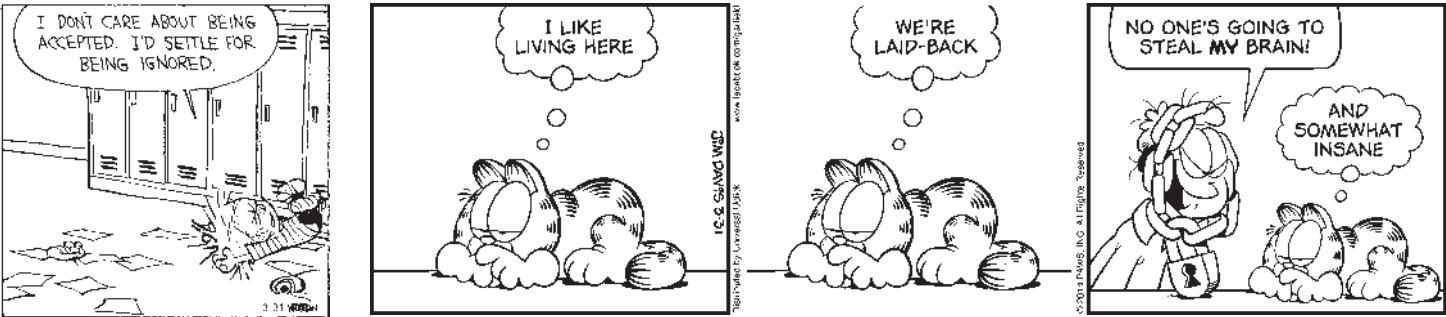
Benzino

Pastimes

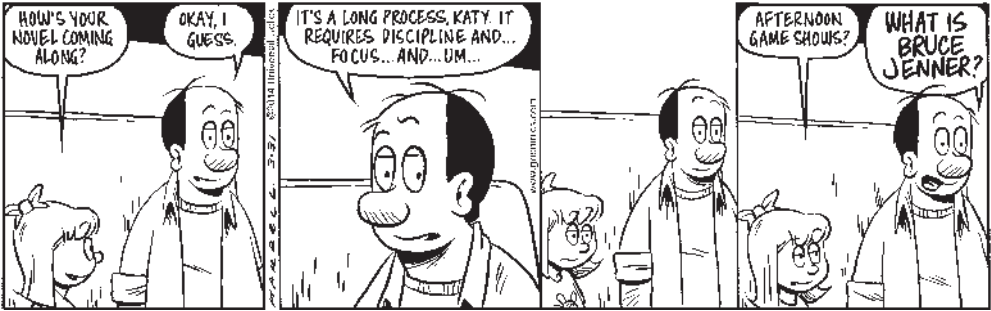
Calvin and Hobbes



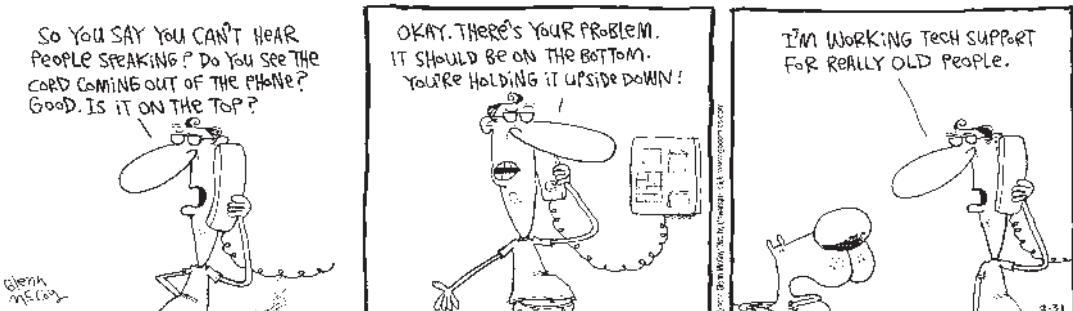
Garfield®



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The Duplex



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

39 "Who am — chunk argue?"

5 Craze

8 "I — Little Prayer"

12 The P in UTEP

13 Id counterpart

14 Master-Card rival

15 Mil. school

16 Sane

18 Echo

20 Dutch bouquet

21 Pirates' drink

23 Automaton, for short

24 D.C. group

28 Kelly of TV

31 Eggs

32 Furtive sort

34 Lubricate

35 Wagers

37 Judge's pronouncement

DOWN

1 Mast

2 Chantilly, e.g.

3 Acronym meaning "Hurry!"

4 Spanish grocery

5 Deco-rates

6 Get older

7 "Stop it!"

8 Tar

9 Ardent desire for fame

10 Business review website

11 Chop-ping tools

17 U-boat, for one

19 — and crafts

22 Hellenic

24 Weep

25 First lady

26 Country-wide

27 Hygienic

29 Snapshot

30 Beer cousin

33 Second-highest

36 Putt, for instance

38 This or that

40 — the fields we go"

42 "Yeah, right!"

43 Lucy's mister

44 Ailing

46 Poi base

47 Satanic

48 Fishing line holder

50 Menlo Park mono-gram

Solution time: 27 mins.

Friday's answer 3-31

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jessica Szohr, 29; Ewan McGregor, 43; Christopher Walken, 71; Shirley Jones, 80.

Happy Birthday: Make the calls, own your destiny and choose what works for you. Stop taking a back seat to those making demands and start following a path that leads to your victory, not someone else's gain. Once you begin to move in a positive direction, you will start to relax and enjoy what life has to offer. Your numbers are 6, 10, 19, 23, 32, 38, 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Work hard. Use your energy wisely and you will manage to stay out of trouble and avoid an emotional argument. A passionate encounter will help relieve tension and enhance your home and personal life. Don't overdo, but be sure to do enough. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Stick close to home. Be agreeable, but don't let anyone take you for granted. Keep the momentum flowing and your goal in sight. An experience will leave you perplexed but closer to making a decision. Do your own thing and avoid distractions. ★★★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You can make professional progress if you don't let your emotions interfere with the choices you make. Proceed to make changes based on facts, not impulse. Your professional and personal life must be kept separate. Love and romance are highlighted. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Keep your guard up and your fingers crossed. You'll have to be smart and a little shrewd if you

want to outsmart someone exposing competitive do-or-die tendencies. Now is not the time to be nice; it's the time to win. ★★★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You've got all the moves. Show what you have to offer and you will enhance your life both personally and professionally. Make changes that will improve your surroundings and encourage you to try something new. All eyes are on you. ★★★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Look for an opportunity and you will find one. Taking on responsibility will improve your chance to advance. An emotional issue regarding a partnership is likely to surface. Follow your intuition and you will make a good choice. ★★★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Questioning is good but procrastinating is not. Size up your situation and act accordingly. If you don't make moves that count, you will continue to spin your wheels. Pour your heart and soul into whatever you do. ★★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Show your enthusiasm. Prepare to do the work and take the credit. Don't hesitate to take an alternative route in order to reach your goal. Secretive action will allow you greater freedom to follow through and finish what you start with-out interference. ★★★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Set your goals, but be reasonable and honest as you move forward. Bravado can work wonders when trying to solicit help, but if you embellish, you will lose an opportunity that you were counting on. Socializing will be fruitful. ★★★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You'll have to be ready to counter any opposition you face. Don't let your emotions come between you and making a good decision. Less talk and more action will help, but don't disregard your intuition—it's likely to be on target. ★★★★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Use past experience and connections to help you get to where you want to go. Invest your time, effort and money in something that will help you develop whatever you need to help you reach new highs, standards and destinations. ★★★★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Repress your feelings if it will help you achieve what's expected of you. Being responsible first and foremost will say a lot about the person you are and how reliable you can be. Build greater support by doing what's required. ★★★★★

Birthday Baby: You are energetic and entertaining. You are a doer and a leader.

Eugenia's website—eugenialast.com, Eugenia's android app @ <http://bit.ly/exhoro> and join Eugenia on [twitter](#)/[facebook](#)/[linkedin](#).

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

Difficulty Level ★ 3/31

5		6			8		3	2
				6	4	9		5
2				3			7	
	2				9		5	3
4	7		5				8	
	6			7				1
3		5	2		1			
1	4		9			3		8

Last Friday's SUDOKU Answer

3	1	9	4	7	2	6	5	8
8	5	4	3	1	6	7	9	2
6	7	2	5	9	8	4	1	3
1	9	7	2	5	3	8	6	4
5	4	3	8	6	9	1	2	7
2	8	6	7	4	1	5	3	9
7	3	5	1	2	4	9	8	6
9	2	1	6	8	7	3	4	5
4	6	8	9	3	5	2	7	1

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WONDERWORD By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

DAVID RUCCO (REALITY TV HOST & AUTHOR) Solution: 10 letters

S I H C N U L F R I E N D S T
T T T A E H E I T A L I A N A
R A N R S A V V E N T U R A T
E L S E E F A M I L Y S M C I
S Y R T I A R N R A K M G K V
S F N T Y D T F I N E F I S E
E A A I S L E S I N V L O E C
D S E P I C E R E E M O R D L
S I I S R L D O G G U R G I O
A R N C H E F H E N S E I S D
T O Y N S W S C E L I N A E I
S T T N E I I T W W H C P C S
A C I R F R D O O F O E U U H
P A C O O K B O O K S H O A E
M E A S U R E M E N T S S S S

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Last Friday's Answer: Eggplant

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SALARY: Minimum Wage

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CLOSE DATE: April 4, 2014

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SALARY: Minimum Wage

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CLOSE DATE: April 4, 2014

POSITION: Mechanic & Electrician
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76ers end 26-game skid, pound Pistons, 123-98



PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Desperate to see a victory again, Philadelphia fans wouldn't even wait for the end, standing to cheer as time was running out in the third quarter.

By then it was clear: The 76ers were going to win for the first time in two months, and they were going to do it with ease.

The 76ers snapped their NBA record-tying, 26-game losing streak, routing the Detroit Pistons 123-98 on Saturday night to avoid establishing the longest skid in U.S. major pro sports history.

"It's not something I want to be a part of," 76ers guard Michael Carter-Williams said, "so it's great that we got this win."

Carter-Williams and Thaddeus Young each scored 21 points for the 76ers, who won for the first time since beating Boston exactly two months ago and did it impressively, leading by as much as 32 points. They also ended an 18-game home losing streak, which was one shy of another NBA record.

Beaten badly a number of times during their skid, the 76ers got to experience life on the other side, ringing up a season-high 70 points in the first half.

Their 26 straight losses equaled the 2010-11 Cleveland Cavaliers and also the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers, who dropped 26 straight from Sept. 12, 1976-Dec. 4, 1977.

"We were just happy to get a win," Young said. "I don't think it was for the streak or anything like that, we just wanted to go out there and win a basketball game and continue to just play."

Henry Sims added 16 points for the Sixers, who hadn't won before their home crowd since beating Charlotte on Jan. 15. Fans in the crowd of 17,438 were into it from the start and grew louder throughout, standing and cheering in the final seconds of the third and then getting up again to deliver a standing ovation for the final 45 seconds of the game.

Greg Monroe had 20 points and 10 rebounds for the Pistons, who lost for the 11th time in 13 games. Blown out a night earlier by Miami, they made the 76ers look as good as the Heat with a sloppy effort that included 18 turnovers, many after starting point guard Brandon Jennings was ejected in the first quarter.

"They came out and competed tonight.



Philadelphia 76ers' Tony Wroten, left, and Hollis Thompson celebrate after an NBA basketball game against the Detroit Pistons, Saturday, March 29, 2014, in Philadelphia. Philadelphia won 123-98, breaking a 26-game losing streak.

They wanted it more than we did," Pistons guard Rodney Stuckey said.

The Sixers were expected to be among the NBA's worst teams, though they briefly fooled everyone when they opened the season by beating Miami and Chicago during a 3-0 start. But they look nothing like that team now, having traded three of their top players before February's trade deadline and replacing them with what coach Brett Brown said is the youngest team in league history, one that has been unprepared or perhaps just unqualified to win NBA games.

There is young talent on the roster, with Carter-Williams the possible Rookie of the Year and Nerlens Noel, still out recovering from a torn ACL, also a lottery pick in last year's draft. Brown doesn't question the Sixers' plans or his decision to leave San Antonio to come coach here, insisting the team was headed in the right direction and that all this losing "will be a distant memory in September."

"Our judgment day isn't today and it won't be tomorrow," Brown said before the game. "We're on a three to five-year plan."

The present was finally fun on Saturday.

The 76ers opened a 10-point lead after one, capitalizing on some free throws when Jennings picked up two

technical fouls arguing a call that wasn't even against him and was ejected with 1:18 left. A 9-0 run made it 55-38 with about 5 1/2 minutes left in the half, and when Detroit crept within 10 with 1:32 remaining, Philadelphia closed with another 9-0 spurt to open a 70-51 cushion at the break.

The 76ers extended it to 32 late in the third, and Brown pulled his five starters together with 5:13 left and a 30-point bulge. There was no visible celebration, though there was surely some relief.

"There was some emotion," Carter-Williams said. "Of course we were happy to win again, it's a great thing to be on the winning side."

Clippers 118, Rockets 107

In Houston, Chris Paul had 30 points and 12 assists, Jamal Crawford added 22 points as Los Angeles clinched its franchise-record third straight playoff appearance by stopping Houston's five game winning streak.

Houston was without injured starters Dwight Howard and Pat Beverley.

It wasn't all good for Los Angeles. Blake Griffin left in the first quarter with back spasms and didn't return, and Glen Davis missed the second half for disciplinary reasons after throwing a temper tantrum in the second quarter.

James Harden led the Rockets with 32 points, and Chandler Parsons had

28. DeAndre Jordan added 20 points with 12 rebounds for the Clippers, who are third in the Western Conference.

Spurs 96, Pelicans 80

In San Antonio, Marco Belinelli scored 18 points and San Antonio never trailed after its opening possession to extend its winning streak to 17 games with the win over New Orleans.

Kawhi Leonard and Manu Ginobili scored 15 points each, Patty Mills added 13 and Tim Duncan had 12 points and eight rebounds.

San Antonio (57-16) extended its lead to 3 1/2 games over Oklahoma City (53-19) for the league's best record.

Reserve guard Brian Roberts had 18 points to lead New Orleans (32-41), which had its five-game winning streak snapped. Austin Rivers added 16 points, Tyreke Evans had 11 points and Al-Farouq Aminu had eight points and 10 rebounds.

New Orleans was without Anthony Davis, its leading scorer and rebounder. Davis is day to day after injuring his left ankle 4 minutes into the Pelicans' victory over Utah on Friday night.

Wizards 101, Hawks 97

In Washington, John Wall scored 25 points, Drew Gooden had 16 as Washington inched closer to its first playoff spot since 2008 with a win over free-

falling Atlanta.

Washington entered the game needing a win and a loss by the New York Knicks on Sunday to make the playoffs.

Wall scored 13 points in the last 7:16 of the third quarter and the Wizards finally escaped the pesky Hawks, who have lost six straight and 20 of 26.

Jeff Teague scored 19 points and Paul Millsap 17 for Atlanta.

Washington followed up a 13-point win over Eastern Conference leader Indiana on Friday with a win over the Hawks, who lead the Knicks by 1 1/2 games for the final playoff berth in the East.

Mavericks 103, Kings 100

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 19 points and Dallas avoided a potentially serious blow to its playoff hopes by rallying in the fourth quarter to beat Sacramento.

The Mavericks blew a 17-point lead and trailed by five in the fourth quarter before recovering for their 20th straight regular-season win at home against Sacramento, the longest against any opponent in franchise history.

Dallas (44-30) is in a virtual tie with Memphis (43-29) for eighth place in the Western Conference, a half-game behind Phoenix. The Mavericks have eight games left and finish the regular season at the Grizzlies.

Rudy Gay scored 30 for the Kings.

Monta Ellis had 17 points and six assists, and Sam Dalembert added 15 as Dallas avoided a second loss to a West also-ran on a franchise-record eighth-game home stand that ends Tuesday night against Golden State.

Heat 88, Bucks 67

In Milwaukee, Chris Bosh scored 14 points, LeBron James had 13 as short-handed Miami wrapped up its three-game trip through the Midwest with a victory over Milwaukee.

James Jones added 10 for Miami in place of star guard Dwyane Wade, sidelined a second straight game with a sore hamstring. The Heat also played without Ray Allen and Mario Chalmers.

It didn't matter against the team with the NBA's worst record.

The Heat led 46-29 at halftime and held the Bucks to a season low for points in a half and in a game.

John Henson had 12 points and 10 rebounds for Milwaukee.

Eagles cut ties with WR Jackson, sign QB Sanchez



PHILADELPHIA (AP)—DeSean Jackson went from the trading block to the chopping block.

Jackson is out in Philly—just as Mark Sanchez was on his way into town.

Unable to find a taker on the trade market, the Eagles released him, ending the Pro Bowl wide receiver's six-year stint with the team. His playmaking days are over in Philly, and the tailspin from key cog to unexpected free agent comes with a hint that off-field issues are at the root of the split.

Jackson thanked the Eagles organization and fans in a statement Friday, and also denied "unfounded reports" that he was released for any reason related to his lifestyle.

"I would like to make it very clear that I am not and never have been part of any gang," Jackson said. "I am not a gang member and to speculate and assume that I am involved in such activity off the field is reckless and irresponsible. I work very hard on and off the field and I am a good person with good values."

"I am proud of the accomplishments that I have made

both on and off the field. I have worked tirelessly to give back to my community and have a positive impact on those in need. It is unfortunate that I now have to defend myself and my intentions. These reports are irresponsible and just not true."

Before releasing Jackson, the Eagles announced they had signed Sanchez. Bounced out of New York after the Jets signed Michael Vick last week, Sanchez moved down turnpike to Philadelphia in what essentially was a swap with Vick.

"I think we passed each other on the train," Sanchez said, laughing.

Sanchez can wave goodbye to Jackson, too.

Jackson was coming off a career-best season in Philadelphia, leading the team with 82 catches for 1,332 yards and nine touchdowns. He had a \$10.25 million contract for the 2014 season and was signed through 2016.

"After careful consideration over this offseason, the Philadelphia Eagles have decided to part ways with DeSean Jackson," the Eagles said in a statement.

The Eagles had no other comment. Jackson's agent, Joel Segal, did not immediately return

a request for comment.

Jackson has 356 career receptions for 6,117 yards and 32 touchdowns. He's a dangerous returner who went to the Pro Bowl in 2009 after taking two punts the distance. Jackson has four career scores on punt returns, including the memorable 65-yard game-ending return to cap a comeback win over the New York Giants in 2010.

The 27-year-old receiver is entering his seventh NFL season.

The Eagles had been put out feelers that Jackson was available. Coach Chip Kelly refused to commit on Jackson's return at this week's NFL meetings.

But other teams could be quick to sign one of the NFL's

top receivers.

Speaking at the NFL meetings, Jets owner Woody Johnson expressed interest in Jackson, saying: "We're looking at a number of players, including DeSean."

Jackson could be a showboat—memorably dropping the ball in celebration before the goal line after an apparent long touchdown—and upset the Eagles this season when he lobbied for a new contract shortly after they were eliminated in the playoffs. His departure leaves the Eagles with Riley Cooper, who survived a video scandal that showed him using the N-word at a concert, and Jeremy Maclin as the starting wide receivers.

Wisconsin beats Arizona 64-63 in OT in West Region



ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)—Frank Kaminsky carried Wisconsin to the Final Four with 28 points, including six in overtime, as the Badgers defeated Arizona 64-63 in a physical West Region final Saturday night.

Kaminsky had 11 rebounds and scored from all over, including three 3 pointers, for the No. 2 seed Badgers (30-7). It's Wisconsin's first Final Four appearance since 2000, and first for 69-year-old coach Bo Ryan, who earned his 704th career victory.

Nick Johnson had the ball with a chance to win, but he missed a shot that came just after the buzzer for Arizona (33-5), the top-seeded team that has yet to win a West Region final in Anaheim in four tries. Johnson led the Wildcats with 16 points, and Aaron Gordon had 18 rebounds in the relentlessly physical game.

Johnson stood with his hands on his hips, staring straight ahead, while Kaminsky and the rest of the Badgers rushed to celebrate.

Traevon Jackson added 10 points for the Badgers, and Kaminsky was chosen as most outstanding player of the West Region.

Kaleb Tarczewski scored 12 points and Rondae Hollis-Jefferson had 10 points for the Wildcats, who were trying to get coach Sean Miller to the Final Four for his first time. Instead, Miller was sent to the sidelines on the same day his younger brother Archie's Dayton Flyers lost to Florida in the South Region final.

The first 40 minutes were a back-and-forth struggle between the only 1-2 seeds remaining in the regionals, with neither team leading by more than three points over the final 12:09 of regulation.

Overtime was even more dramatic, with Arizona having an answer for just about everything Wisconsin did.

Ben Brust hit a 3-pointer to put the Badgers up at the start of the extra session; Gordon answered with a 3 to tie it up again at 57. Kaminsky scored inside and Gordon dunked at the other end for another tie.

Kaminsky's jumper and a free throw by Josh Gasser gave Wisconsin a 62-59 lead. Tarczewski's two free throws and Jordin Mayes' tip-in drew the Wildcats to 64-63 with 58 seconds left.

T. J. McConnell's jumper missed, but Arizona got the offensive rebound and found Johnson, who missed and got called for the push-off on Gasser with 3 seconds left.

Wisconsin inbounded on the baseline, but turned the ball over in a play reviewed by the referees.

That set up the final play, with Pac-12 player of the year

Johnson unable to bail out the Wildcats.

Florida 62, Dayton 52

In Memphis, Tenn., first yet again this season, the Florida Gators want more. Much more.

Try a national championship.

Scottie Wilbekin scored 23 points and Florida became the first team to advance to the Final Four with a 62-52 win Saturday night over the 11th-seeded Dayton Flyers in the South Region final.

The Gators reached their fifth Final Four after losing at this point in each of the past three NCAA tournaments. This time, they came in as the country's top-ranked team and the overall No. 1 seed.

Florida won its 30th straight game and improved to 36-2, topping the 35 wins by the 2007 national championship squad.

"I couldn't be prouder and happier," Florida coach Billy Donovan said after being drenched with water in the Gators' locker room.

"In a lot of ways, outside the Michigan game, we were close to being in three out of four Final Fours right now, and that says a lot about these guys. But I think those experiences maybe helped us be a better team this year than maybe we would have if we'd have gotten to a couple of ones earlier."

Patric Young scored 12 points, and Michael Frazier II added 10 for Florida. The Gators will play either UConn or Michigan State in Arlington, Texas, in the national semifinal.

The celebration was a bit muted because a regional title isn't the Gators' end goal.

"There's more hunger within us, within this whole team to keep going," Young said.

Dyshawn Pierre led the Flyers with 18 points, including the final 11 for Dayton (26-11). Devin Oliver added 12 points.

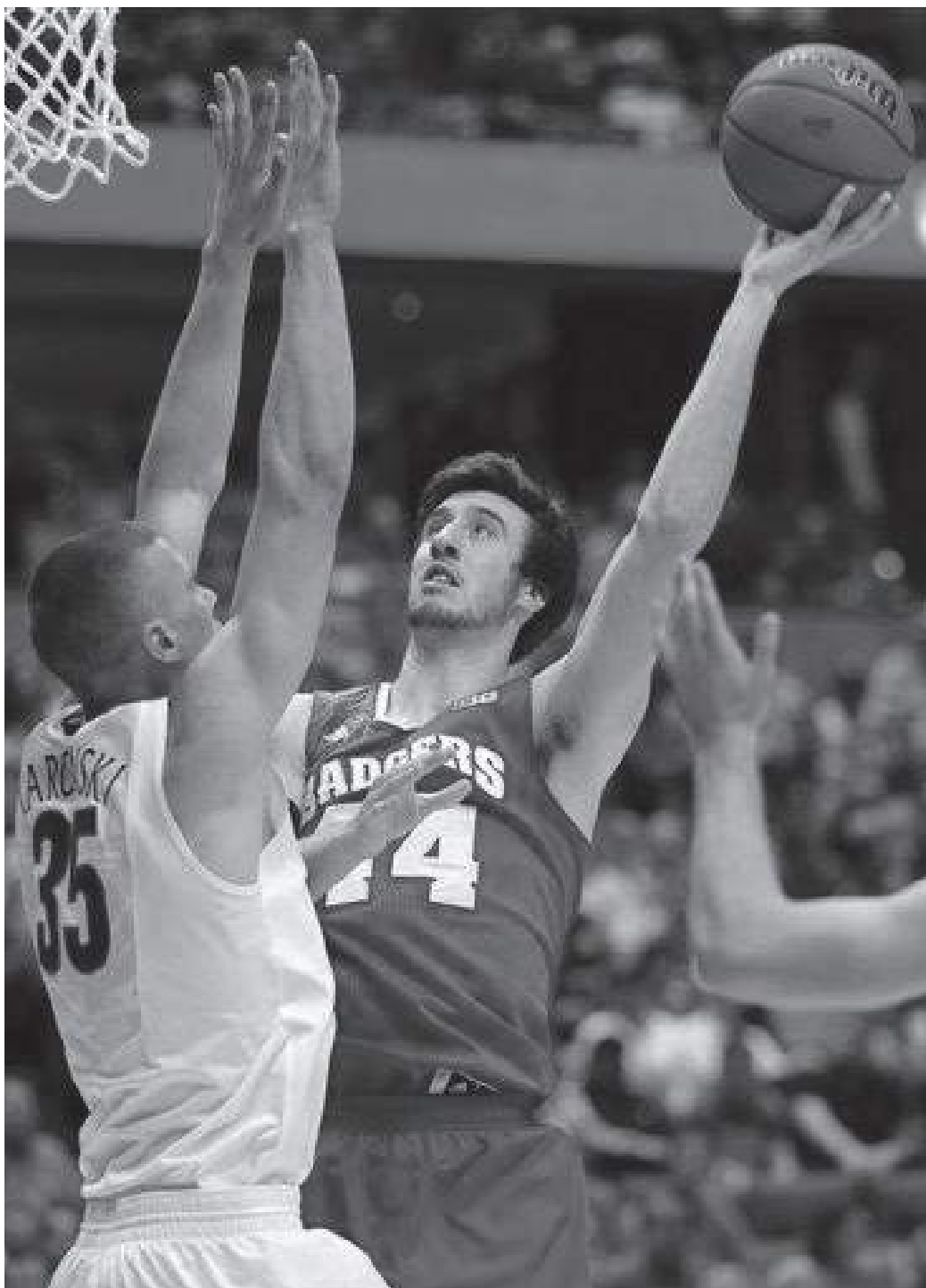
Dayton came in trying to become only the fourth 11 seed to advance to the Final Four. The Flyers had upset Ohio State and Syracuse in reaching their first regional final since 1984. They missed their second Final Four and first since 1967 as Florida held them to their lowest scoring game this season.

Coach Archie Miller complimented the Gators, saying that just being on the floor with Florida gave Dayton a "big-time feeling."

"It's always hard to lose the last game of the season, but in the back of my mind, I'm not sure a team in the nation captured more people's hearts than these guys did, and they did it the right way," Miller said.

The Flyers hit one more field goal than Florida (19-18), but the Gators outrebounded them 37-26. They also had a massive edge at the free throw line (21 of 28) to (6 of 8).

Florida finished the first half



Wisconsin forward Frank Kaminsky shoots past Arizona's Kaleb Tarczewski (35) during the first half in a regional final NCAA college basketball tournament game, Saturday, March 29, 2014, in Anaheim, Calif.

on a 15-1 run to take the lead for good, going up 38-24. The Flyers opened the second half with two quick 3s to pull within eight, only to watch

the Gators push their lead to 17 with 11:35 left on a layup by Young.

The Flyers kept coming but couldn't get closer than eight

in the second half, the last at 58-50. The Gators went cold down the stretch, once missing five shots on one possession with five offensive rebounds.

Kershaw headed to DL for 1st time in career

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)—Los Angeles Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw is headed to the 15-day disabled list for the first time in his seven-year career because of a swollen muscle in his left upper back.

The 26-year-old left-hander, coming off his second Cy Young Award in three years, already had been scratched from his scheduled start in San Diego on Sunday after an MRI revealed the problem.

"I'm not going to get into specifics," Kershaw told reporters. "I can't pitch right now. It's frustrating. I've been hurt before where I knew when I'd be able to pitch. I'm getting better right now, just not fast enough. You don't feel like you're a part of the team when you're hurt. It's not a good feeling."

Kershaw was on a throwing program and was tossing the ball at different distances Saturday before the team's Freeway Series finale against the Angels

when he experienced some discomfort on his 27th throw. The team said he will be placed on the DL on Sunday.

"He felt it, and that was the last straw," manager Don Mattingly said. "So at that point, we knew we couldn't have gone any farther and that it was a DL situation. It's a situation - not just for me, but for everyone - that we've got to save Clayton from Clayton at this point and be cautious. We can't allow him to try to keep pushing and go forward. If it was up to him, I'm sure he'd want to go farther. But we can't allow him to do that right now."

Kershaw, who signed a \$215 million, seven-year contract on Jan. 15, won the Dodgers' season opener 3-1 against the Arizona Diamondbacks in Australia last weekend.

The three-time All-Star was hoping to get back in the rotation for Friday's home opener

against San Francisco, but instead it will be Hyun-Jin Ryu, who also will get the assignment Sunday in San Diego against Andrew Cashner. Ryu started and won the second game of the Australia trip, but tore a toenail while running the bases that day and wasn't sure he'd be able to fill in for Kershaw until after his side session Friday.

"I think that once Clayton felt something, he knew that

he wasn't going to make his start on Friday," Mattingly said. "With his throwing progression, the fact that he stopped right away is all we've asked of him from the beginning: 'If you feel it at all, you've got to stop.' And he stopped right away."

Kershaw has made 33 starts, struck out at least 229 batters and logged 227 2-3 innings or more in each of the last three seasons - including a career-high 236 innings last year,

Dayton missed chances to cut the lead as Oliver missed a 3-pointer with 2:07 left, then Scoochie Smith threw it away trying to pass out to Matt Kavanaugh.

Miller said Pierre was completely exhausted late.

"You can't go to a guy eight times in a row and expect him to score every time, but he gave us a fighting chance," Miller said.

Then Wilbekin ended the Gators' scoring drought at 4:39 with a pair of free throws, and he hit four of six at the line to finish the game.

Dayton took over the FedExForum so thoroughly that the Gators were booed when they came out for warm-ups and pre-game introductions. Miller tried to use his deep bench, using 11 Flyers at least 5 minutes trying to wear out the Gators with sheer numbers. Donovan nearly matched Dayton by going 10 deep himself.

The Gators went cold for nearly 6 minutes between a dunk by Casey Prather with 11:55 left in the half and a baseline drive by Frazier with 6:00 to go. The Flyers scored eight straight when Smith's 3 gave them their first lead of the game at 21-19 with 6:58 remaining.

Kendall Pollard's layup tied up Florida for the last time at 23, then Dorian Finney-Smith hit a free throw with 4:22 left putting the Gators ahead to stay.

As Florida went on its run, Dayton missed its final five shots. Finney-Smith grabbed a rebound of a missed 3 by Frazier and threw the ball back out for the final shot of the half. Wilbekin then beat the buzzer with a 3-pointer that helped quiet the Flyers' faithful for the first time all day.

when he finished 16-9 with an NL-best 232 strikeouts and a 1.83 ERA.

Kershaw led the majors in ERA for the third straight year, becoming the first pitcher to accomplish that feat since newly elected Hall of Famer Greg Maddux did it from 1993-95.

Mattingly wouldn't make any predictions about when Kershaw will return to the rotation. The Dodgers have five off days scheduled between now and April 15.

"This is not something that we say, 'OK, we think he'll be ready by this date' - and if he doesn't get there, then it's like, 'Oh, Clayton's had a setback,'" Mattingly said. "We should just let it do what it's supposed to do and let the medical staff do their work let them tell us what he could do."

"And because of all the days off we have and the schedule we have, it's really not worth pushing him."

Bowditch leads Texas Open

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Steven Bowditch opened a three-stroke lead Saturday in the Texas Open, while Phil Mickelson withdrew after 10 holes because of a pulled muscle in his right side.

Bowditch, the 30-year-old Australian seeking his first PGA Tour title, shot a 4-under 68 to reach 12 under at TPC San Antonio. Matt Kuchar and Andrew Loupe were tied for second. Kuchar shot 65, and Loupe had a 70.

“I’ve won four or five times on between Australia and Web.com,” said Bowditch, who would get into the Masters with a victory. “I’ve got a little experience, but not a great deal, especially at this level. I’ve never slept on a lead, so we’ll see how

we go.”

Mickelson withdrew after pulling the muscle teeing off on No. 1—his 10th hole of the round. He hopes to play next week in the Houston Open, the last event before the Masters.

“I pulled a muscle on my downswing trying to hit it hard,” Mickelson said a statement. “It just killed and it wouldn’t subside for 10 or 12 seconds. I’m going back to San Diego (for) a couple of days and have a doctor look at it, but there’s really not much you can do for a pulled muscle. I hope I’ll be OK to play the Shell in Houston, but I just don’t know.”

Lefty was 1-over par in the round and 4 over overall when the three-time Masters cham-



Steven Bowditch, of Australia, watches hits his tee shot on the second hole during the third round of the Texas Open golf tournament, Saturday, March 29, 2014, in San Antonio.

pion was taken off the course in a cart. His caddie, Jim Mackay, said Mickelson felt a twinge on his tee shot on No. 1.

“It’s definitely not his back,” Mackay said. “It’s his right side. The thing he had been talking about is how good his back had been feeling here. He’ll definitely play Houston, if he can.”

It’s the second time this year Mickelson has withdrawn in the middle of a tournament. He pulled out at Torrey Pines after making the cut because of a back injury.

On Friday, Mickelson made the cut on the number, following an opening 77 with a 70.

Bowditch, ranked 339th in the world, chipped in at the first two holes, for birdie at No. 1 and an eagle at the par-5 sec-

ond. He drove to chipping distance at the 338-yard fifth hole and made a 4-foot birdie putt.

“(The chip on the first hole) calmed my nerves a little bit,” Bowditch said. “It was as easy a chip as you’re going to have out here.”

He cooled after that when he missed the green at No. 9 and bogeyed, then strung together pars until he drove close to the at the 324-yard downwind 17th. He chipped inside a foot and tapped in for birdie and kept his two-stroke lead when Loupe matched the birdie.

Loupe closed with a bogey.

Kuchar, a six-time winner on the tour, had the best round of the week. He holed out the greenside bunker on No. 1.

“Still surprised to be at 7 under today,” Kuchar said. “It’s not a score I would have thought was out there with these sort of (windy) conditions.”

Pat Perez was fourth at 8 under after a 69.

Kevin Na, who had a 16 on the ninth hole three years ago, was 7 under after a 69.

ENFORCERS

From Page 28

second inning, another one off the Braves’ error and an RBI single from Verlance Secharmidal in the third.

The Enforcers gained more cushion in the next two innings, prevailing in the exchange, 5-2, but were threatened in the last two innings when the Braves mounted a comeback. The Braves drew an RBI triple from Frankie Lifofoi, an RBI single from Logan Martin and one run off an error from Secharmidal at shortstop to move within four, 5-9, after five and a half innings.

The Braves remained in contention after shutting down the Enforcers at the bottom six. At the top of the seventh, J.J. Li-

foifoi blasted a two-run single with only one out to slice the deficit to two. However, Lifofoi’s base hit failed to keep the Braves going, as Secharmidal stepped up on defense to foil the comeback bid. Secharmidal got the second out when he tagged out Lifofoi, who tried to run to third. The Enforcers shortstop then picked up a grounder from Luke Iguel and threw to second baseman Fred Songao, who tagged out Angel Palacios.

BIG LEAGUE Fielders 6, Padres 3

In last Thursday’s Big League game, the Fielders (4-6) stunned the second-running Padres (7-4).

The Fielders got into the board early and kept the lead

despite failing to earn a single run in the last four innings to bag their fourth win.

A two-run inside-the-park homer from Jose Lizama at the bottom of the second inning helped the Fielders registered 6-2 lead. The Fielders three other runs were courtesy of Fermin Renguul’s RBI walk and Cody Kaipat’s stolen base in the first and the latter’s sacrifice out in the second.

The Padres collected two runs off the Fielders’ errors in the second inning and two more from a sacrifice fly in the third and a stolen base in the fifth to threaten their foes. The Padres then bagged their first earned run at the top of the last inning and moved within one when A.J. Lizama’s double drove leadoff batter Steven

Cabrera home.

The Padres were already called for two outs before Cabrera scored and the third came right after Lizama’s base hit, as rightfielder Ton Muna caught a fly ball from T. J. Sablan to lift the Fielders to the close win.

Braves 9, Lions 8

In the other Big League game last week, the Braves (8-2) escaped the Lions’ paws.

Closer Frankie Lieto struck out Ian Iriarte for the third out at the top of the seventh and last inning to halt the Lions’ rally and save the Braves. The third out came after the Lions racked up four runs to bring the Braves’ lead down to one. Paul Celis hit an RBI single, Keene Deleon Guerrero had an RBI

triple, and the Lions logged two unearned runs to remain afloat with two outs and Jared Ayuyu at second base. Ayuyu was later stranded, as Lieto got the three strikes against Iriarte.

The Lions (1-8) played catch up all night, as the Braves got off to a good start, scoring five runs in the first inning. Brandon Lieto had a two-run triple at the bottom of the first, Frankie Norita canned an RBI single, and the two other runs came off a wild pitch and a sacrifice out.

The Braves then had a roller-coaster ride in the last five innings, while the Lions scored two runs apiece in the third and fifth before adding up four more runs at the top of the last to boost their chances for an upset.

MISO

From Page 28

wards within seven, 61-68.

The MISO All-Stars tried to counter attack, but failed to score, as Jared Sablan muffed two charities, while Kobe Mendoza converted a baseline drive to cut the deficit to 5, 63-65, 1:30 left on the clock. Two more missed charities from Lucio Santos and the selection’s two botched offensive sets after the rebound plays kept MHS’ hopes alive, as Mendoza canned another basket. Sensing trouble, MISO

All-Stars coach Chris Tenorio sued for time with his team clinging to a 68-67 lead, 19 seconds left on the clock.

When the game resumed, the Dolphins quickly gave up a foul to send Allen Yu to the line. Yu drilled his first shot, but faltered on the second one, while MHS rushed the ball toward its frontcourt with Yap on the finishing end. He missed the layup, but drew a foul on Sanchez.

Yap split his charities, drilling only the first shot. The Dolphins’ Ignacio Borja then won the battle for the rebound against Yu, but ran out of

space at the baseline and was forced to kick the ball out to Mendoza. The MHS guard pulled up for a long jumper from the left key, but his shot was too strong. The Dolphins prevailed in the fight for the rebound anew with Justin Cayading soaring high for the ball and landing down the floor where two MISO All-Stars players tried to grab the leather away from him.

The referee called a held ball and MHS got the ball back (possession arrow) with three seconds remaining in the game. It was Basa’s turn to ask for a time out to work out

a make-or-break play. The latter happened, as after Yap received the inbound pass from Aaron Pamintuan on the baseline and faked off Sablan’s defense, the MHS shooting guard’s 10-footer hit the back iron of the rim and bounced off as the final buzzer sounded.

Santos top-scored for the MISO All-Stars’ close win, firing 25 points, while Marc Babauta added 17 before fouling out midway in the fourth canto. The duo combined for 19 of the MISO All-Stars 27 points in the third quarter to turn a 35-31 halftime lead to a double-digit advantage enter-

ing the final canto.

Mendoza had 20 in the sorry loss, while Ano contributed 11.

Meanwhile, the Settsu-Saipan caging also featured a separate competition for girls and results of four-team contest will be reported in Saipan Tribune this week.

MISO All-Stars 69 – Santos 25, Babauta 17, Feria 11, Sanchez 7, Allen 4, Sablan 2, D. Camacho 2, W. Camacho 1.

MHS 68 – Mendoza 20, Ano 11, Cayading 8, Pamintuan 6, Ong 6, Yap 4, Gabaldon 3, Borka 2, Francisco 2.

BUCHER

From Page 28

had a faster run split (46:03).

In the women’s division, Bucher, survived a tough challenge from Guam pro Mieko Carey, to reclaim the XTERRA Guam title she lost to United Kingdom’s Jacqui Slack. Slack and her boyfriend Ben Allen of Australia missed last Saturday’s race, as the couple joined the XTERRA Great Ocean Road in

Australia yesterday.

Bucher, who kicked off her bid for XTERRA Asia’s Triple Crown with a win in the Philippines, made it to the finish line in Guam just less than a minute ahead of Carey, as the Swiss triathlete timed in at 3:03:52 versus the latter’s 3:04:33.

Carey got out of the water first with her 22:17, while Bucher was second at 23:09, more than a minute ahead of eventual third placer Carina Wasle (24:21). The Guam pro kept

her lead after the bike race, recording 1:44:41 against Wasle’s 1:44:00 and Bucher’s 1:47:15. However, Carey got lost a bit along the run course, wasting precious minutes, as she clocked in at 57:55 in the last part of the race. Bucher had the best time at 53:58, while Wasle, who is the strongest runner among the three, surprisingly logged 1:06:50.

With Butcher and Hugo winning in Guam, they have a chance to claim XTERRA

Asia’s Triple Crown this Saturday in XTERRA Saipan. Both Bucher and Hugo finished runner-up in the Saipan race last year, losing to Slack and Allen, who will be back to defend their respective titles.

3 Saipan finishers in XTERRA Guam

Meanwhile, three Saipan triathletes completed XTERRA Guam.

Tyce Mister competed in the pro division and tallied

3:37:08 to place 10th in his category and finished ahead of Kanae Quinn (4:43:19) and Brad Ruszala (5:08:27). Mister timed in 24:44 in the swim leg, 1:54:13 in the bike race, and 1:17:11 in the run part to place at No. 23 overall among 102 finishers.

Quinn joined the 45 to 49 age group and had split times of 29:40, 2:45:29, and 1:28:10, while Ruszala was in the 40 to 44 division and clocked in at 31:25, 3:03:40, and 1:33:22

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES				
NBA STANDINGS				
EASTERN CONFERENCE				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Toronto	41	31	.569	—
Brooklyn	38	33	.535	2½
New York	30	43	.411	11½
Boston	23	49	.319	18
Philadelphia	16	57	.219	25½
Southeast Division				
y-Miami	50	22	.694	—
Washington	38	35	.521	12½
Charlotte	35	38	.479	15½
Atlanta	31	41	.431	19
Orlando	21	52	.288	29½
Central Division				
y-Indiana	52	21	.712	—
x-Chicago	40	32	.556	11½
Cleveland	29	45	.392	23½
Detroit	26	47	.356	26
Milwaukee	14	59	.192	38
WESTERN CONFERENCE				
Southwest Division				
x-San Antonio	57	16	.781	—
Houston	49	23	.681	7½
Memphis	43	29	.597	13½
Dallas	44	30	.595	13½
New Orleans	32	41	.438	25
Northwest Division				
x-Oklahoma City	53	19	.736	—
Portland	47	27	.635	7
Minnesota	36	35	.507	16½
Denver	32	41	.438	21½
Utah	23	50	.315	30½
Pacific Division				
L.A. Clippers	52	22	.703	—
Golden State	45	27	.625	6
Phoenix	44	29	.603	7½
Sacramento	25	48	.342	26½
L.A. Lakers	24	48	.333	27
x-clinched playoff spot y-clinched division				
BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS				

The Week in Sports

Saipan hosts visiting athletes

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
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REPORTER

The island's hospitality was in full display last week, as two sports federations and one football club hosted visiting athletes.

The Saipan Swim Club hosted Palau, Guam, and Marshall Islands swimmers who competed in the two-day SSC International Invitational Tournament and the 36th Annual SSC Ocean Swim. About 150 swimmers participated in the swim meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool and half of them were off-island.

Basketball Association of Northern Mariana Islands also played host to four off-island basketball teams when it held the 2014 Settsu-Saipan Friendship Basketball Tournament



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A Matansa FC player is a step ahead of an Independents FC player as they chase the ball down the sideline during the opening game in the NMIFA women's league last week at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A Settsu Red Impulse player drives to the basket during their battle for third place game against the Notre Dame Royals in the Settsu-Saipan caging last Friday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Saipan Swim Club's Dominic Zedde races in the 50m freestyle event during last week's 2014 SSC International Invitational Swim Meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.

at the Marianas High School Gymnasium. BANMI hosted the girls and boys teams of Guam's Notre Dame Royals and squads from Japan's Settsu Red Impulse. The four

visiting teams played against the MISO All-Stars and Marianas High School.

Another Japanese group arrived on Saipan last week and this time the Vivid Blue



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Enforcers' shortstop Verlanche Secharmidal throws to first base during their Senior League game against the Red Sox last week at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Saipan Swim Club's Victoria Chentsova, second from left, joins Guam swimmers at the starting block waiting for the kickoff of the 50m freestyle event during last week's 2014 SSC International Invitational Swim Meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Docomo Pacific's Tony Diaz goes up for a reverse layup against Gwap Gang during their playoff game last weekend in the MDX caging at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

FC played in the MP United FC-hosted Pacific Ocean Cup 4 at the Koblerville Elementary Scholl Field. Shirley's FC and Tinian Premier FC also fielded one team each in the weekend tournament.

Meanwhile, regular leagues and tournaments on Saipan continued last week.

In basketball, the MDX caging completed its playoff cast with IT&E and San Antonio notching automatic semis berths and the Pelicans TBK Mechanic, Docomo Pacific, and Gwap Gang bagging seats in the first round of the playoffs. Four teams were eliminated.

In Little League, the Enforcers

handed the erstwhile unbeaten Red Sox back-to-back losses in the Senior League, while the Comets also snapped the Enforcers winning run in the Junior League. In the Major division, the Falcons absorbed their first loss at the hands of the Braves.

In badminton, champions were crowned at the conclusion of the Sun Palace Singles and Doubles Competition 2014, while in football, Northern Mariana Islands Football Association kicked off its 11 v 11 women's league with Independents FC, MP United, and Kanoa FC winning their opening games.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Players and coaches of Japan's Vivid Blue FC pose for a photo before playing in yesterday's Pacific Oceania Cup 4 at the Koblerville Elementary School Field.



**76ers end
26-game skid,
pound Pistons,
123-98
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**Wisconsin
beats Arizona
64-63 in OT in
West Region
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28 MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2014

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Enforcers on a roll in Senior League



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The Enforcers first baseman Darion Jones looks at the Enforcers pitcher, while a Braves runner gets ready for the next play during the top of the fifth inning of their Senior League game last Saturday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
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REPORTER

The Enforcers withstood the Braves' rally in the last two innings to notch a 9-7 victory in their Senior League game in the 2014 Saipan Little League Baseball last Saturday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

The victory was the Enforcers' third in a row and improved the team's record to 6-3, just one win behind the Braves (7-2). The four other squads—Red Sox, Jets, Fielders, and Lions—entered in the Senior League also played last Saturday and results of their respective matches and team



standings will be reported later this week.

The Enforcers and Braves played in the third and final game last Saturday with the former holding the latter scoreless in the first three innings for a 4-0 lead. The Enforcers had two unearned runs in the

Bucher, Hugo near three-peat



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

XTERRA Guam champion Renata Bucher is flanked by Saipan's Tyce Mister, left, and Kanae Quinn during a group photo at the finish line area of last Saturday's race.

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
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REPORTER

Pros Dan Hugo and Renata Bucher moved one win away from completing a three-peat after ruling last Saturday's XTERRA Guam Championship.

Hugo, who also topped XTERRA Philippines early this month, was the overall top finisher in the Guam race, completing the 1.5-kilometer swim, 35K bike, 8.2K run in 2:28:40. He beat nine others entered in the pro division, including fellow South African triathlete Bradley Weiss, who clocked in at 2:35:43



The two South African bets were neck-and-neck after the swim leg in the waters off the Ports Authority Beach with Hugo timing in at 19:39 and Weiss posting 19:41. Hugo then gained cushion in the bike leg after registering 1:24:41 against the 1:29:02 of Weiss and the former went on to cross the finish line about seven minutes ahead of the former after completing the run leg in 44:20. Weiss had a flat 47:00 in the last part of the race, the third best in the men's field, as eventual third place Olivier Shaw (2:39:12) of New Zealand

See BUCHER on Page 26

MISO All-Stars keep crown



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The MISO All-Stars' Marc Babauta of Tinian goes up for a left-handed shot during the second quarter of their title game against Marianas High School in the Settsu-Saipan caging last Friday night at the MHS Gymnasium.

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
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REPORTER

The MISO All-Stars topped 2014 Settsu-Saipan Friendship Basketball Tournament after a thrilling 69-68 victory over Marianas High School last Friday night at the MHS Gymnasium.

The Dolphins' Michael Yap split his free throws and missed a jumper at the buzzer, allowing the MISO All-Stars to escape with the 1-point win and retain the boys division championship. The back-to-back champions ruled last year's tournament against the visiting Settsu Red Impulse.

The Red Impulse was relegated to the battle for third place

this year and lost to the Notre Dame Royals of Guam, 38-59. The Dolphins and the MISO All-Stars, on the other hand, arranged their title duel after taking the Top 2 spots in the round-robin elimination.

In the winner-take-all finale, the MISO All-Stars controlled majority of the game and even led by as much as 14 points in the third, 51-37, before MHS trimmed the deficit down to 11 at the end of that canto, 58-47.

The Dolphins hung in there, but could not seem to break the 9-point barrier until the last 2:30 of the match when two defensive stops gave way to a point-blank shot from Jaron Ano and a fastbreak basket from Yap and moved coach Preston Basa's

See MISO on Page 26

